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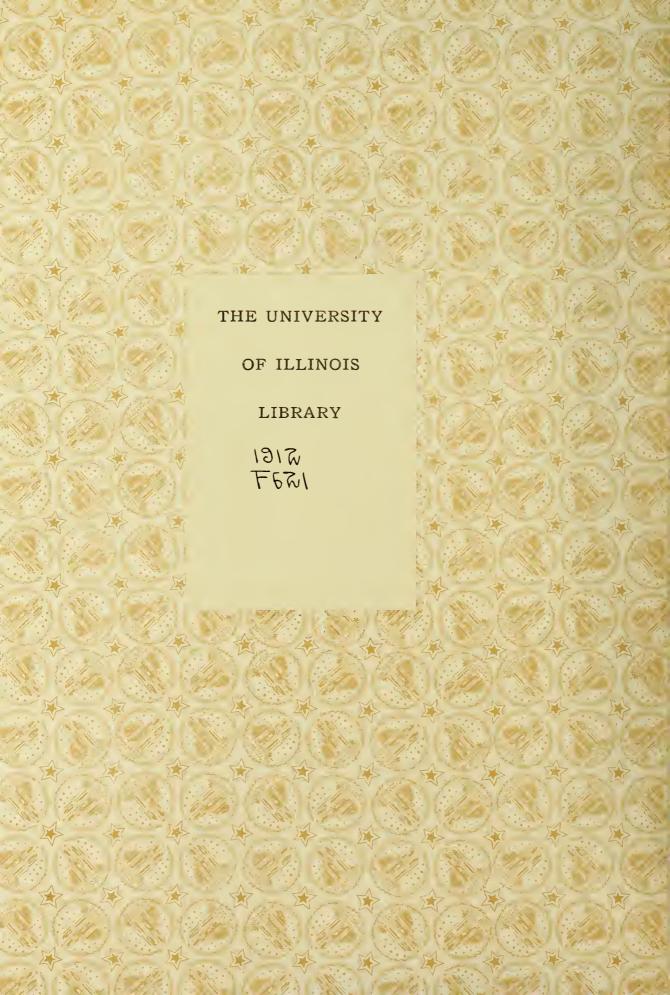
Herder's Philosophical Poems

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HERDER'S PHILOSOPHICAL POEMS

BY

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THESIS

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HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

Sara Adelaide Fleming

ENTITLED Herder's philosophical Coems

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

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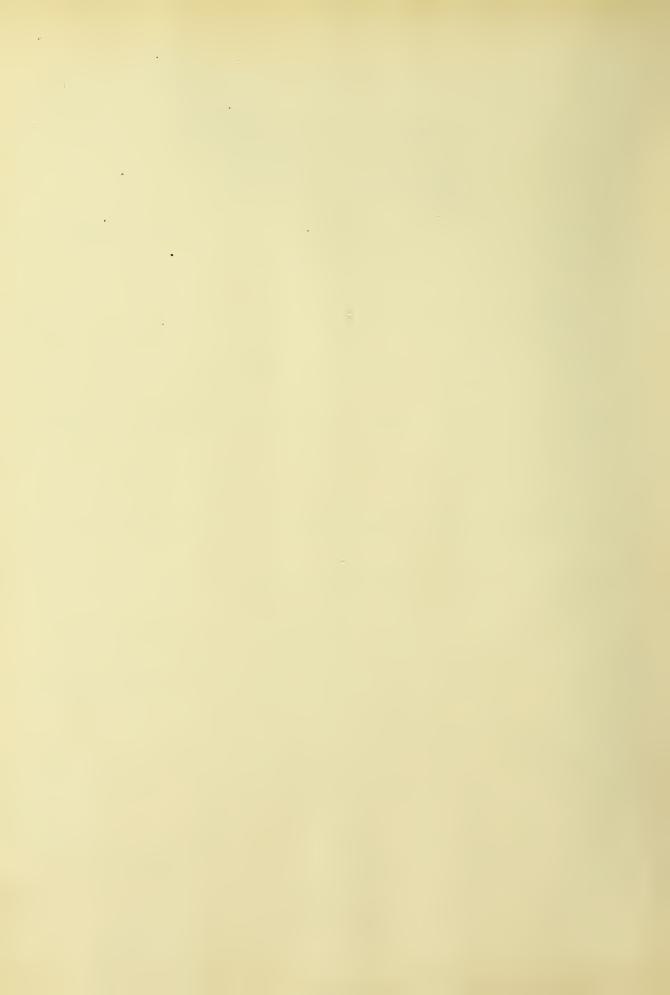
Head of Department

Recommendation concurred in:

Committee

on

Final Examination



To apply to Herder's philosophical poems the usual critical method would necessitate one's going thru them with a view to dissecting them and pointing out the similarity of this or that conception to that of other philosophers. But this would be entirely unjust and out of the question in the study of Herder: for of all critics he was most opposed to such a mode of procedure. He favored rather that sympathetic appreciation of a writer and his works, which comes from a thorough and unprejudiced study. The fact is self-evident that Herder was acquainted with the views and writings of contemporaneous philosophers such as Spinoza with his Utopian theory of the relations of individual, church and state in the "Theologico-Political Treatise" and with his moral philosophy in the "Ethics." He was, of course, also acquainted with Leibniz and his system of "Monads" and the "Pre-established Harmony," as well as with Kant and his critical system of philosophy. There is, moreover, no doubt that such thinkers as Shaftesbury. Diderot, and Rousseau had their influence upon Herder. But it is not my purpose to go thru his poems and point out wherein his views are similar to those of any of these men. We shall simply try to give the poems as they are and let them speak for themselves.

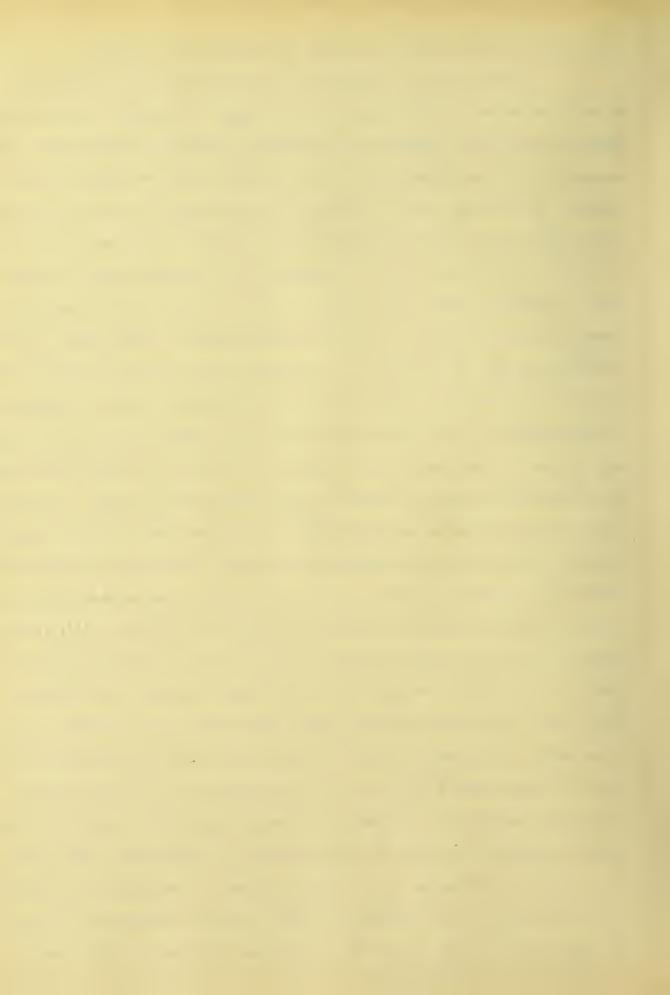
Herder is first, last and all the time himself and his philosophy shows distinctly individualistic characteristics which make him primarily unlike any one else that ever lived. His is essentially a biological philosophy, a philosophy of life in the broadest sense.

Since Herder was from his youth a sworn enemy of all abstract knowledge and of all philosophical systems built on such knowledge, it has frequently
been questioned whether he was a philosopher at all. Herder was, of course, preeminently a poet, but a poet in the sense of the ancient Greeks according to whom
the poet and the philosopher were identical. While we would not expect a Leibniz,
a Spinoza or a Locke to express their purely speculative philosophy in poetry,
there is, on the other hand, no reason why philosophical thoughts of the high

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order which we find in Herder should not find expression in poetry.

Herder himself in speaking of his work said, "In the realm of the purely speculative of philosophy, the poet is always a stranger; but the philosophical experiences, conjectures and hypotheses concerning the human soul are adaptable to all the strength and force of poetic art and are worthy of all her charms." He also says that he is willing and bold enough to brave all the warnings of the critics about the poet's entering the field of philosophy, and that he will be only too glad to make an exception if his exception might be a masterpiece. A thorough study of the poems "Das Ich" or "Selbst" with the many related poems will leave no doubt as to their being masterpieces. Herder says, "If the poet as a messenger of the gods, as a confidant of the secrets of the soul, went with bold steps where the philosopher must lurk timorously only at a distance; if he pressed into the holy place, what would he see? things seen by no eye; what would he hear? sacred, consecrated words which no ear has ever heard; what would he say? winged words which no tongue has ever before dared to utter. In other words, if the experiments and investigations which have been carried on concerning and in the human soul, were transformed into poetic, bodily forms; if the conjectures of the philosopher would at the hands of the poet receive perceptive certainty; if the hypotheses were formed anew into poetic fiction; if every great psychological truth received perceptive life; in short, if the whole world of the human soul should enter the light of poetic splendor of which it is capable, what a poem! If the poet with his powerful hand would depict the whole expanse of the soul, its heights and depths, he would begin where the philosopher leaves off; if he made actual a real to us all the capabilities of the human spirit, the creative power of its imagination that magic spring which especially in the youthful periods of the world has been so rich, the suppositions of the divinity of the soul, the enthusiasm of its strong emotions, the delicacy of its anatomy and its alertness in the composition of ideas, its nerve structure, the power of its impulses and all the actions of its passions, the freedom of its destiny Suphan, Vol. 1, Page 474-

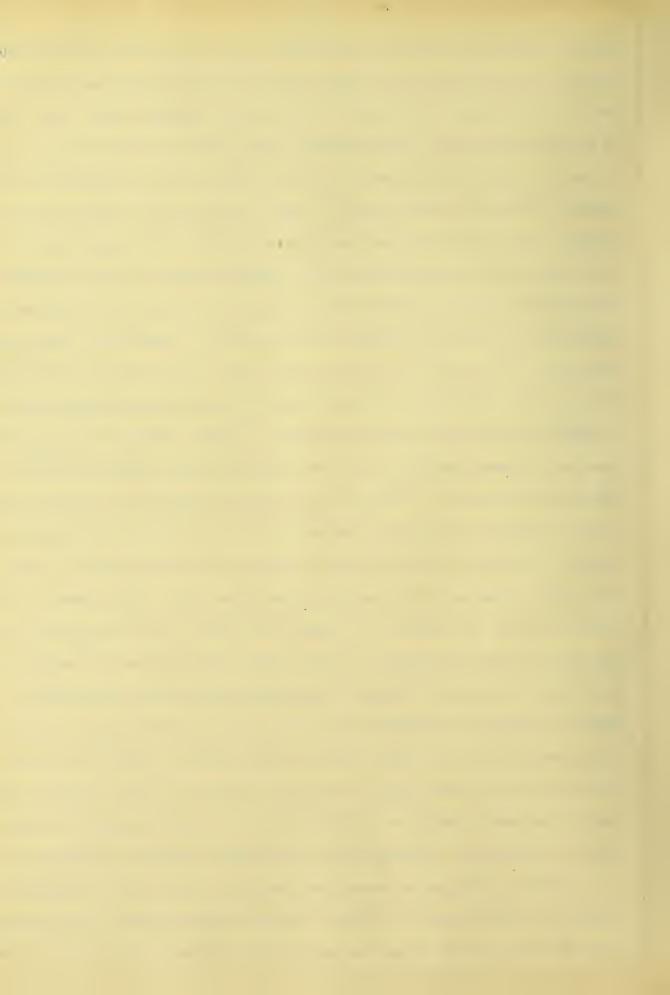


which raises it above pain, misery, and death; if the poet made real to us all these sides of the soul and told us everything which he saw in the soul and which he himself has felt and knew to be active in us- this would be a poem which must strike all the strings of the human heart. Our whole soul would work to meet him, partly because we saw his whole soul in turmoil, and partly because we got a view of this object, even the human soul in all its activities. How much Akenside, Young and Shakespeare have done in portraying only one side of the human soul, or some contradictions or opposing forces in the human heart! How pleasing is a single allegory of Klopstock! Ifnow all the sides, all the contending elements, all the emotions and sensibilities are awakened at the same time, what a beautiful fine commotion!"

Herder in his essay "Vom Erkennen und Empfinen der menschlichen Seele" conceives of the soul as a mirror of the outer world. The sensations which come from exterior objects are taken into the soul by means of its feelers, as one might term the senses, - although Herder would not consider the senses as separate but in some sort as a united sense of the soul, - are recast by it and become its content. Thus we can see how Nature in its broadest sense would play such a great rôle in his philosophical poems. Of all persons who ever lived, Herder must have been in the most sympathetic attitude toward this great source of phenomena. No one, perhaps, has ever felt more than he a nearness, a kindred relationship with the Spirit which these phenomena represent. Hence the great influence which the night had on him. He seemed to think of it as the time when he could best be conscious of the World-soul and feel the oneness of his own soul with it. In the poem "Die Nacht" he speaks of the voices of nature, "Come to us again, O holy, quiet mother of the stars and of heavenly thoughts. The thirsty earth has been waiting for you, her flowers are wearily bowing their heads to taste but two drops of dew from thy chalice, and with them bows also wearily my soul overfilled with images, waiting for thee to gently release it from everyday thoughts and give itto drink of images of other worlds and bathe my thirsting soul in rest. O, thou



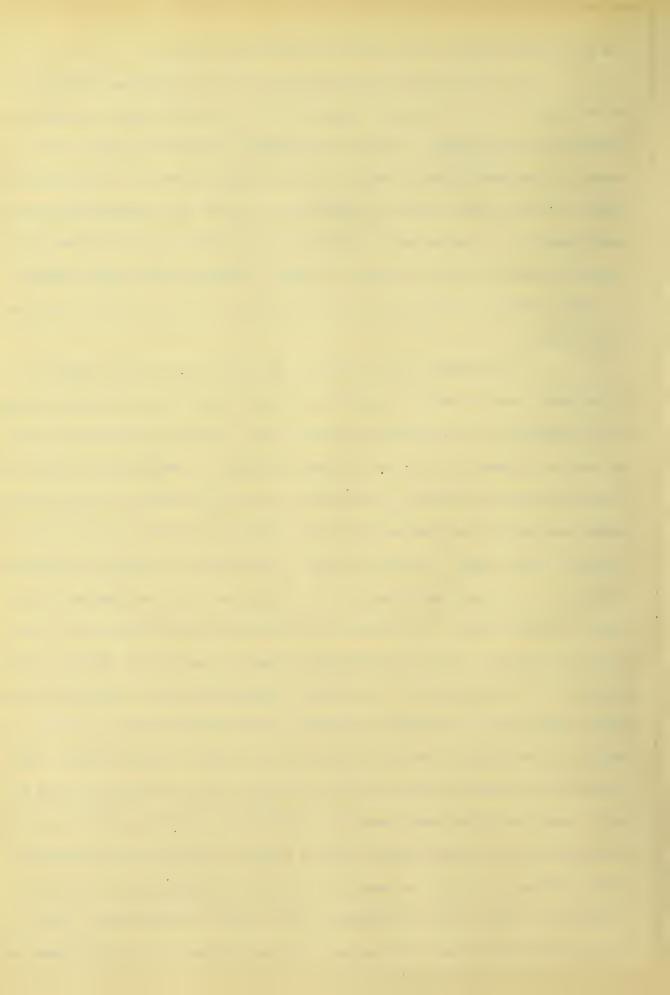
goddess with thy gold crown of many stars , thou on whose broad, black mantle thousands of worlds shine, thou didst bring them all into being and dost hold them in their restless, fiery motion with the arm of eternal rest. What a song of praise sounds among all these worlds to you, the directress of all the choirs of stars; a high song of praise at which the storm becomes silent and all other sounds die away into a holy silence." Herder then goes on to speak of this holy silence, this song of the stars, as the gentle speech of the heavens which rolls as a stream in the eternal shores of the infinite creation. Then, in highest adoration of the Soul or Spirit of this creation, he sings, "Broad night encompasses my soul, seas of Infinitude embrace my spirit. High night, I kneel before thy altar! All the stars in the broad ether make a chaplet for thy holy temples which are full of God's writ. Who can read it, this writing in flame on the brow of night from the hand of the Uncreated One. It says, 'Jehovah is the One; His name is Infinitude, and His child is the night whose name is mystery, and no one removes her holy veil.' " Then, as if for the time being he has been premitted to enter the Holy of Holies and look behind the veil, he says, "What spirits are conjured up before me, excellent forms and faces of the other world! A sweet light beams around me which my waking eye has never seen. What a moon! O, what beautiful stars! Do I float? Do I swim? Do I rise? Or, do I sink down before the throne of the Uncreated One? Angels, genii, are around me, the companions of my life and thou too, my brother, thou, my guiding genius whom I never knew. Dost thou extend to me thy hand? Dost thou draw me into this song of praise? O, divine concert of all the angels and all blessed souls! To what sun, to what middle point in all the circles, do they all, the moon and stars, look up? To what All-embracer, All-filler, invisible to me on my planet but not so to the dwellers in the sun. And behold! they all in such a friendly way look down at me. Look, O ye stars, at me who am dust, but yet I think of you, I call you my friends, the companions of my sweetest and most sublime delight, quiet witnesses of my best rest, youths of heaven, sweet children of the glorious night, of her



who is the pure sister of my devotion, my rest and my hope."

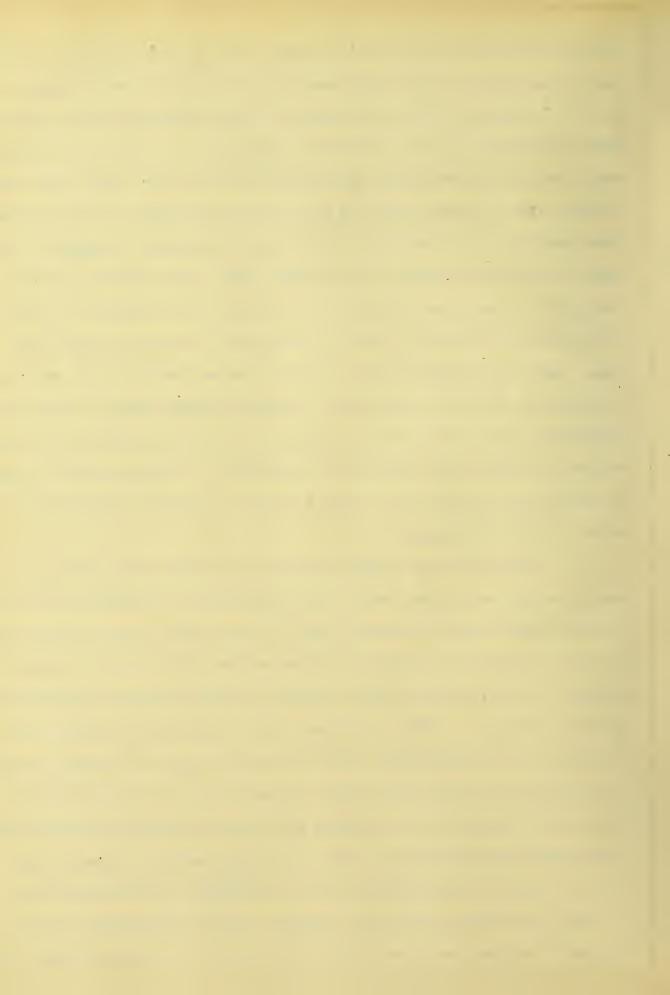
In a similar poem, "Das Gesetz der Welten im Menschen" this same idea of the Spirit of the universe is expressed, but at the same time the fact is emphasized that this Spirit is also in man himself. "Beautiful starry vault of heaven! Entranced, I gaze on thee, thou wide infinite meadow. I see the golden herd of heavenly sheep grazing up there and I look for the Shepherd who with his staff leads it. O, mortal man, dost thou seek the Shepherd of the flock which now bathes itself in ether up there on high? Then look within thine ownself, for there thou hast the higher law which governs not only the worlds, but also thee thyself."

How forcefully does Herder in the first part of "St. Johanne's Nachtstraum" make us feel the animating stirring soul of Nature and the harmony of her creatures. "Most beautiful summer night! I swim in roses and in night violets, in flowers of a thousand fragrant perfumes. O mother nature, where can I become acquainted with all thy children, all the lovers which are now adorning themselves, making love and pairing off and exhaling fragrant joys in the most beautiful bridal night. Beautiful night! How creation is ablaze, is bubbling with life, is in great agitation, and is cooing love! And a hundred beings make a whirring sound. In the air, the sea, lake, and sand, there is a buzzing and making love. The ugly caterpillar mounts up out of its shroud, a flying angel with a hundred colors. O, infinite, inexhaustible One, thou art beautiful. Mother nature, who can count thy children in their manifold forms of life and being, of love and joy! Who can feel them! Only thou, O mother nature, canst because thou dost feel thyself in all the forms of life and being and love and joy." Later on in this same poem, the soul-stirring resulting from the contact with nature makes Herder exclaim, "Who am I among the millions who are now enjoying fullness of life! Who among the infinite millions which I do not see enjoying it! There flies the gleaming spark of God, the glow-worm. Little worm, spark of God, come, shine on me. Who are you that the creating hand has

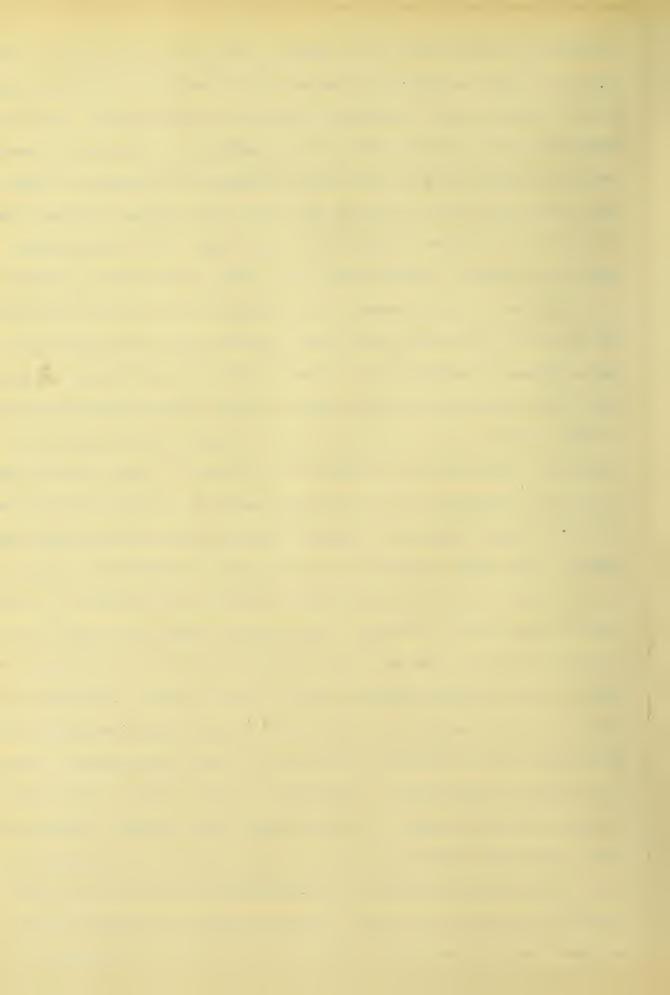


thus made you to glow with the sun's splendor? with the sun's fervency? Who are you? I know you not, and do I know myself? My spark just as small flying out of the sun's burning? Who was it who gave it to me in my dust so that it might shine out of my eyes? Ah, in my heart how flaggingly it surges often! With what weary tread often moves the life-element and then only a short time-- and-- does it shine on then? O spark, dost thou fly on when my worm-body is gone? Art thou, a worm destined to be released out of the night of the grave as an angel? All my senses are locked up; around me is the summer night. Here is not the time for thinking but rather to be, to feel, to live, and feel life surging. To live alone The glow worm is not alone; it does not become what it becomes in order to be alone. And to enjoy myself alone? to tell no one how beautiful thou art, 0 mother nature in thy ardor of summer-love? Beautiful mother nature! To have no one who with me may hear creation whirring, hear the softly sounding wheels turning, see the angel flying, and think of immortality? To think and feel it, unites the earthly life, presses us to a friend's heart. O, beautiful mother nature, thy noblest spark is friendship."

Surely thru this sympathy between man and nature there will arise a sympathy between man and man, and in "Arist am Felsen" we are assured of this mutual relationship among all created things. "On the rocky slope lay Arist sighing, 'Ah, how silent is everything around me and how void of spirit, heart and feeling! How far is that sun which is setting and that sad moon uninhabited by any living beings! " Thus he continues in this pessimistic and cynical mood for some time. "The nightingale sighed above him her song of love; near him in her beloved nest the turtle dove cooed. He hears it not. The brook murmured; the west wind whispered in the branches; but he did not perceive either the near or the distant sound of creation. Then in the sweet twilight a gleam of light came to him from the sun itself and said, 'Is creation to you empty and void? Is the ocean of life which creates your thoughts, without thought? What are your thoughts but copies of what you perceive from without and arrange and order with-

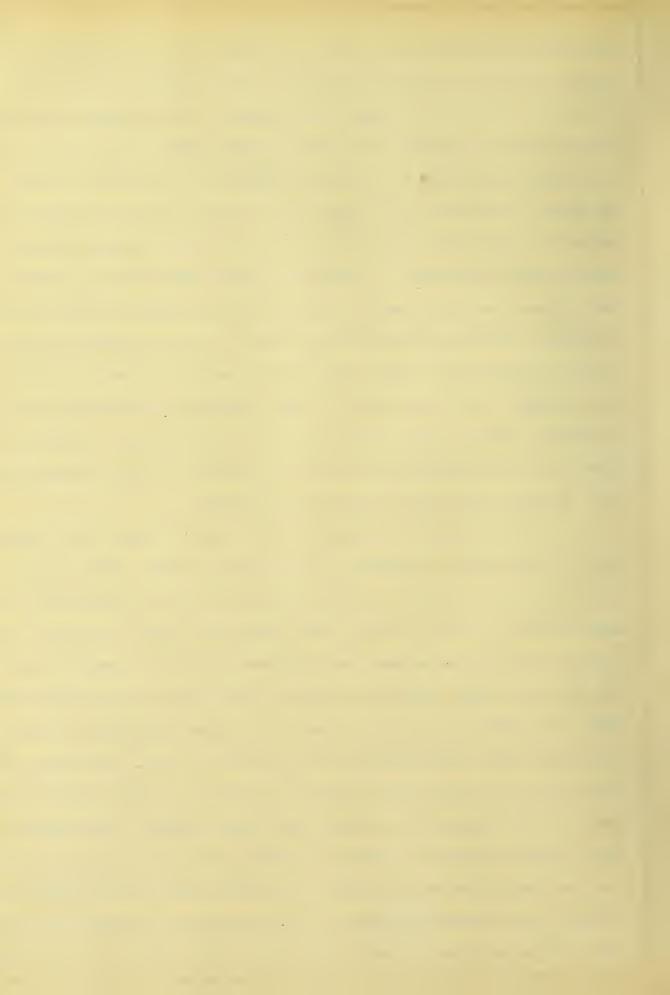


in yourself? The Welt-geist call it Ether or Light, you do not hear it in the sound. That which can neither be seen or heard is what makes you both see and hear and feel and think. It thinks in you; you are only its vessel. And do you imagine that you are the only vessel of this Welt-geist of which every element even air and light is a part? This Spirit furnishes your thoughts, not empty words, and thinks in them. Does not the flower look at you more knowingly than you look at it? It lives independently, enjoys itself, and serves creation. Look at the splendor in the last rays of the setting sun and become acquainted with the Artist who hovers around it with His golden style. Here in the murmuring, there in the song and in the whisper, hear the Spirit whose voice is not song or whisper. Creation is full of thought, full of understanding; great heart which pours warmth into every vein, the ardor of spring into every nerve, and feels itself in All. It rejoices in All. The great active Spirit alone understands, thinks and feels absolutely or in entirety." Then as Arist's faithful dog comes bounding up to him and throws himself at his feet with joy at having found his master again, the sun-genius further expresses the idea that deep sympathy is the common attribute of this Welt-geist as represented in bodily form: in other words, not only the brother-hood of man but of all creation. "Do you imagine yourself alone in creation? That which here binds this friend to you, is it lacking in all those who are of one form and of one blood with yourself? Who brought you up, to whom do you owe yourself, your better self? Who formed your heart? Who often brought you farther on life's journey without you knowing it? Self-interest did not inspirit those who met you, loved and rescued you. Inaudibly (so far as outward sound is concerned) your sighs sounded in their heart; the wish which yet lay unborn in you took wings in their spirit. Did there not come to you often in the time of distress a god, a genius in human form to help you? Did you yourself not often feel presentiments which urged you to go far away and made you care for, rescue, and busy yourself for the friend whom you did not know? But the great mother, Providence, knew you both; she created you for



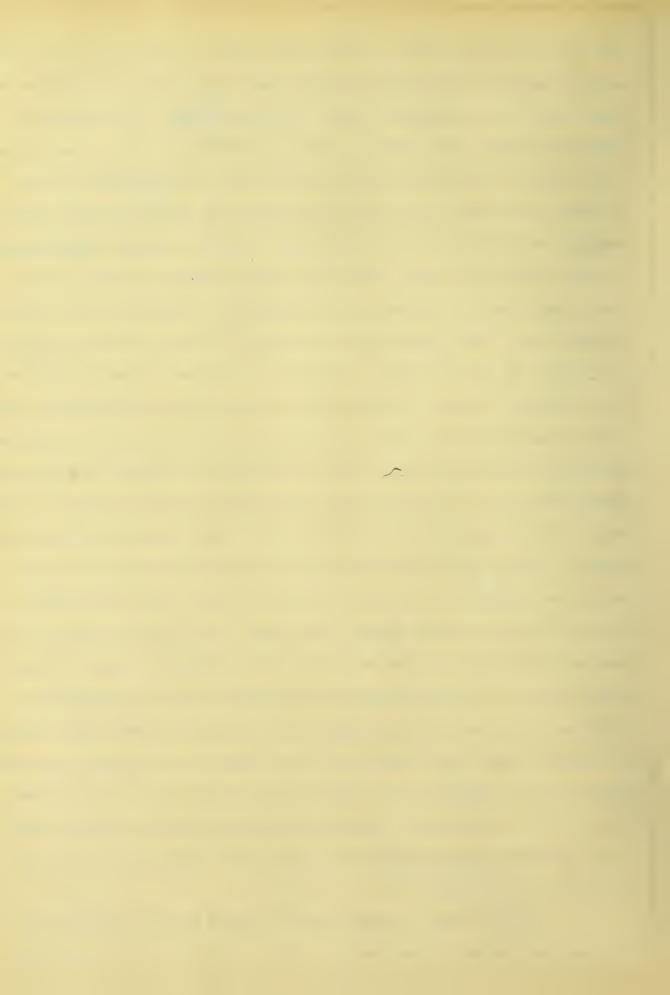
each other; your destinies were forged on the same anvil; in ministering to his distress was your most joyful delight, and in your assistance was his highest blessedness. There beats a great heart in nature. Put your trust in the One who has feeling and sympathy. Thy purest thoughts sprang from the source of the purest Spirit and belongs to it and flows back into it to animate the whole. Thy deepest wish belongs to the great heart of creation and in thy longings and desires all good, upright souls have a voice; thy prayer is theirs; thy echo is from the bosom of them all. O, listen to the high harmony with thy spirits ear." Then as Arist looks up he sees his faithful friend Agathokles, who says to him, "O friend, a restless uneasiness drove me hither. You are sorrowful and are hiding your grief from me. I have long sought the cause of it from your glance or from your mien. Now I have found it. What a nothing it is which makes you pine! I will take it away. A good genius has made me worry about you. O friend, a universal, far-seeing Spirit watches over us. It unites the hearts and wishes of all. Ah friend, there beats a great heart in nature."

In the poem "Die Harmonie der Welt" we get the idea of the invisibility of the Welt-geist, or Welt-sinn, as Herder calls it here. But, although invisible we are not to doubt its presence since we can see its manifestations in nature and feel it in our own inner self. Herder says, "Does the eye see? the ear hear? Thy inner sense sees, hears and knows only what it perceives from without, And do you doubt, friend, the high, inner Welt-sinn? Do you not hear the harp? Do you wish also to see the tone?" In the poem "Parthenope" we find that the attribute which brings harmony into all creation is Love. Herder says, "That which your sight reveals to you, that which is seething in nature and stirring her, that which moves up there in that holy silence of ether or down there in the dust, that which plays on the waves and rustles in the pine branches and beats in your heart and shines out of your eye, now dim with tears, now filled with joy—is Love. Love alone was the creator of being and became the teacher of love-born ones. If you would read the meaning of the great book, Nature, that lies before



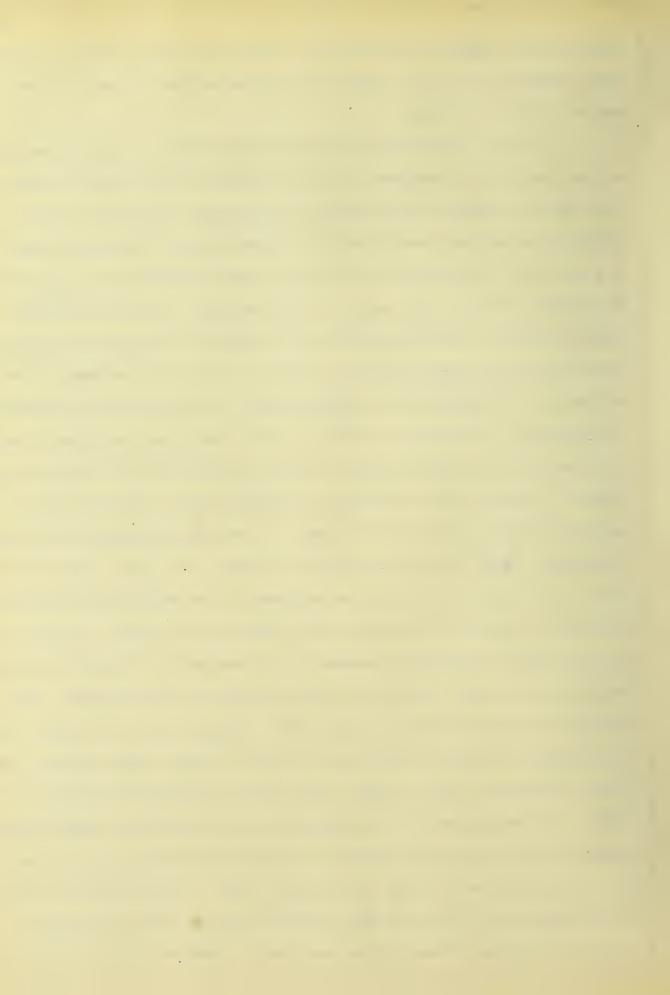
you, Love is the soul therein. If thy spirit wishes to recover, and if thy heart is to get well, then truly follow the high Leader. For whoever seeks nature and truth outside of it, the mother of all life, seeks in vain. It is Nature; it makes forms, brings them together, unites them and blesses them. It causes the bud to unfold to the flower so that Love might bloom in the beautiful flower. The tender bond which holds together the universe, the eternally young, active sympathy, the heavenly ardor with which beings are animated; what would you call it other than it is? -- Love. See how the wave approaching you plays on the shore, gently greets it, and then gently glides away, melting away like a sweet wish melts away. Thus, always with new swelling, the waves of love press each other in the sea of all creation. See there, how the whole heaven is mirrored in the surface of the sea! How the light of the sun seethes and trembles, sunken there in Amphitrite's holy bosom! And there glow the flames of Love, the stars. Zeus bathes himself in the sweet rays of the beautiful youth with the cternal kiss. Divinity flows into every vein and pure love is shed thru the universe. Ah, that humanity which is the first link in the chain of earth's creation still had the charm of innocence which its mother placed in its bosom when her first loving mother-kiss embraced it. 'Go, tender child,' she said, 'and in the turmoil of earth let Love and Innocence alone be your heaven. Never let slip these two joys. Never despise thy happiness and seek the sorrow of folly on the road of false wisdom. 'But ah, how humanity separated from these two, Love and Innocence, or Truth and Nature, now reels and staggers and seeks for its heart a sweet poison, and instead of Love, Sorrow and Pain. Thus I sighed, and the queen of the waves raised her silver tone and said, 'Know thine own heart, never has it deceived you. If you love Innocence it becomes your reward. That which resounds under this golden dome of heaven from my sea even to Zeus' throne, that same sounds in your heart. "

In "Der Himmel" we have again the thought that Love should govern the heart and thus make heaven for us. "Vapors arise, and in the clouds they



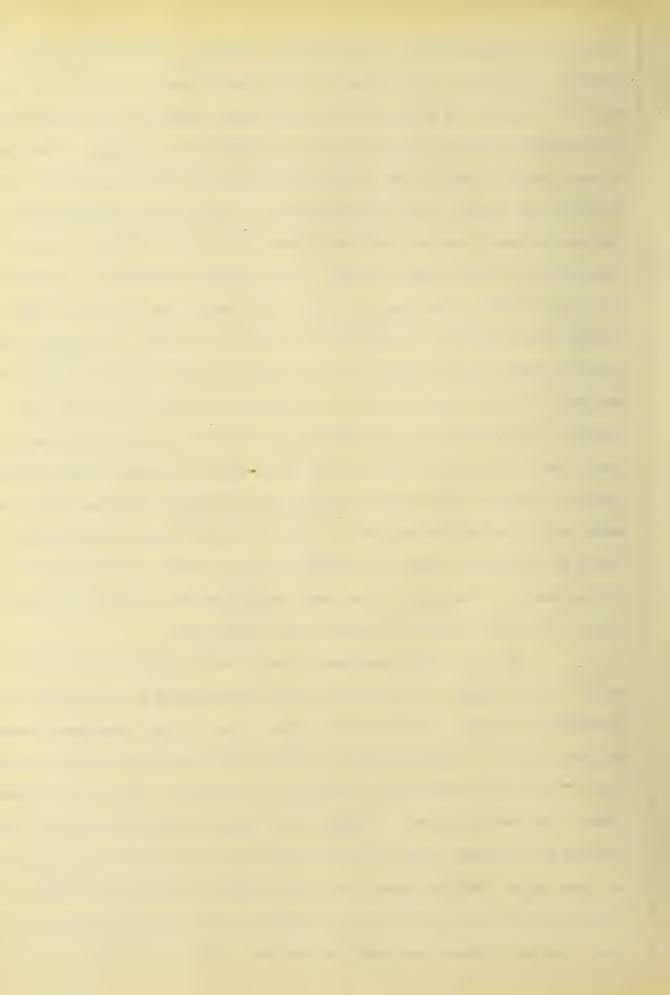
become thunder, lightning and rain-drops. Vapors arise and in the head become anger, discontent and tears. Friend, keep thy heaven from the vapors of passion and let thy brow be the sun."

It is so interesting to notice all thru Herder the striking analogies. In fact, everythigh in the human soul and life finds its counterpart in nature, or at least the objects in nature such as the glow worm, caterpillar, eagle, butterfly, and all the planets, the sun and moon are used to demonstrate some law of man's soul. In "Der Mond" one learns the lesson of faithful duty regardless of criticism. "O noble one, dost thou allow one little word from an envious companion to vex you? The high moon shines there and lets the dogs bark and howl, but it silently and quietly continues shining to light up the darkness." Also the analogy in "Die Raupe und der Schmetterling" is very interesting. "Friend, the distinction or difference of things in earth seems often great when in reality it is very slight and trivial. Age and form, time and space, are only visions of reality. A butterfly saw a caterpillar lazily and wearily creeping along on a dried up bush and it joyously flitted away not even suspecting that it had been a caterpillar. Sadly, the aging one goes to her grave. 'Ah, that I have lived in vain! I die childless and O, how insignificant! And there flies the beautiful butterfly. Carefully the caterpillar wove itself into its shroud. It slept and when the mother's life-fullness awakened it, it imagined it was new and did not know what it had been. Friend, the realm of earth is a realm of dreams. What we were, what we shall yet become, no one knows. Fortunate that we are blind. Let us know only one thing and that is what we are." The poem "Adler und Wurm" also brings out valuable lessons in life. "King eagle was flying sunward with all his might. He already passed thru the clouds and at last reached the highest rock. Panting for breath, he said, 'Now here I am, the highest thing in all the world. Who can fly after me? Who will ever be where I am? 'I will perhaps, some day, said something near him, and he sees just below him and earth-worm crawling. 'And we are brothers? Where did you come from?' 'From the mire and slime.'

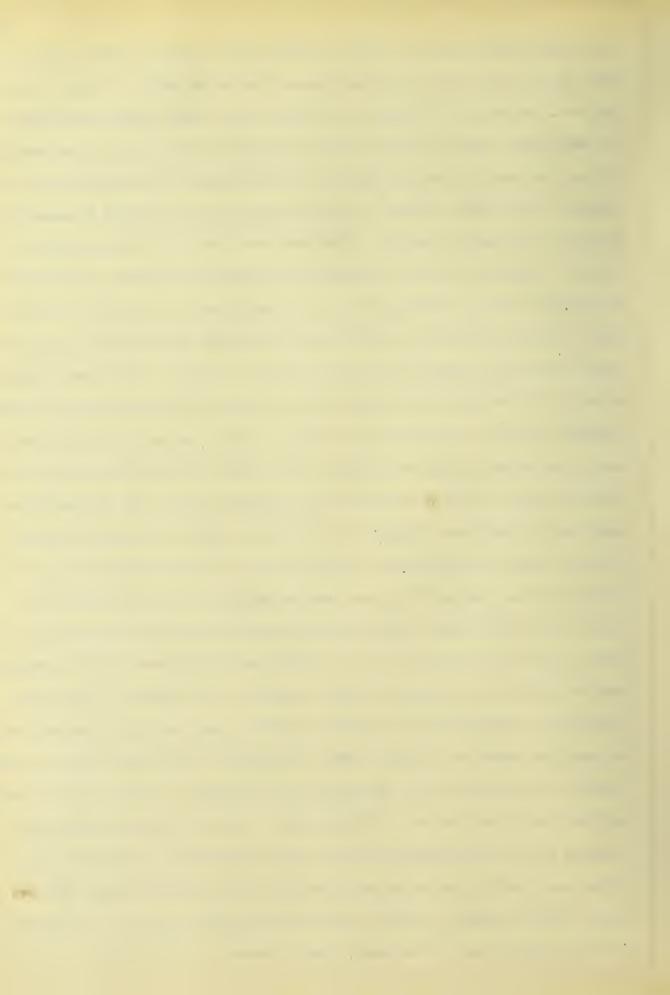


'And how did you get here?' 'Ah pardon me, I crawled.' Ministers, wise-men, generals, chancellors, and cardinals on your glorious height for which you strove with toil and pain and perspiration; you great men, especially, you do not see who stands near you. For one comes to the heights even by crawling. 'You wretched one, 'cried the eagle, 'you crawled, and yet did you venture so high?' 'Pardon me again your majesty,' the polite worm said as it bowed and inflated itself, but now in these times one crawls with more safety than one flies.' Did the worm invent the moral maxim? Perhaps. But at any rate the world is a great book. The bird of thunder became angry and said, 'You creeper, do you mean to teach me the way to the heights?' and seized it to tear it to pieces. 'No indeed,' the creeper pleaded, 'Ah, who would do such a foolish thing as that, but -- I -- only thought -- a high eagle flies but -- a poor worm -- what could he do? -- he crawls.' The eagle flew magnanimously away and left the place to the worm. 'Have I not always thought that,' now said the earth-worm as it raised itself upward. 'Pastime, pleasure, the transient splendor, all must pass on and away, but I remain, and it laughed and laughed. The eagle, however, heard not a word, but was flying in his heaven. And you, noble one, when you leave the world and give the worm possession of the field on the rocky summit, and move on into thy rest-torment, will not this retort of the worm trouble your soul?"

The idea of the happiness of honest toil is further carried out in many of Herder's poems. The idea that life from the cradle to the grave is one of striving and hoping. In some of the poems it has a rather pessimistic strain and Herder seems to consider life as a play in which the human actors are assigned their rôles and play their parts according as the manager, Fate, decrees, sometimes up and some-times down. "Arrogant man, where are now the flatterers, the splendor and brilliancy which surrounded you? All has fled from you and you beg as a poor exile. Foolish Fortune has exalted others instead of you, and it will hurl them down too as it did you. Yet thanks be to you, splendid Chance, in that even a play which cheats everybody furnishes us a joke which teaches us a lesson."



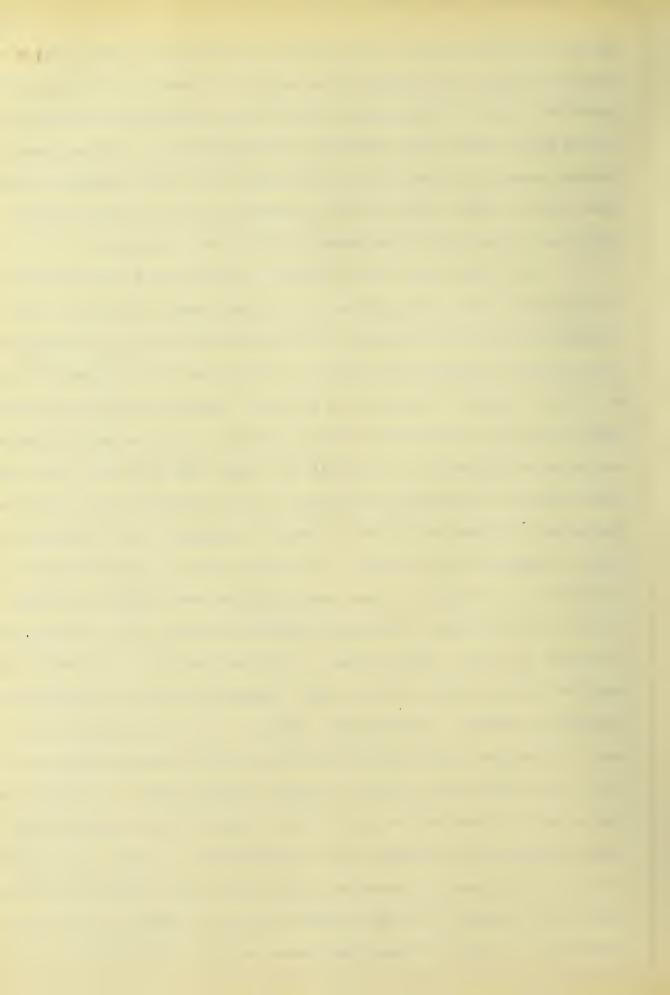
Also in the poem "Wechsel" we have, "Worldly goods, they are fruits loaned us for use: man's life is like a borrowed dress. Always the wheel of fortune turns up and down. Whomsoever it raises to the peak it also rolls quickly down again." In "Das Leben," "Life is a play; then learn how to play or feel a disadvantage." In the first part of "Die Verhängnisse" we have somewhat the same strain as in "Wechsel", but toward the last is the more hopeful attitude which is essentially Herder's true feeling about it. "The Fates weave and weave indefatigably the destiny of mortals. Always restlessly, Klotho draws from off her rich distaff the many-colored thread, choosing for the one a dark, and for the other a bright destiny. Lachesis spreads it out and raises it now high up, now lets it sink down until with averted glance the inexorable Atropos cuts it. In the long thoughts of men the thread floats and draws them on. From out the deep spring of wishes youthfully rises a dream-structure of life; to the one, error; to the other the nod of the helpful gods; now propitious winds, now storms on the sea, but at last the calm brings the weardy vessel to the longed-for haven. Not you daughters of night but you daughters of light: Faith shining like the stars and equipped with the kingly staff, rose-garlanded mother of Love, and thou, immortal Hope, with the palm in thy hand descend from those blessed gardens into your sanctuary, the breast of the upright man, and propitiously weave from off your skein the thread which never being raised too high but abiding and shining anew amid the entanglement and confusion, winging its flight, spreads out the future." Thus we see that Herder considers the Fate sisters as Faith, Hope, and Charity rather than as some dire Furies who delight in man's unhappiness. The same thought is continued in a poem called "Die Schwestern des Schickslas" in which he says, "Call not Fate cruel, call not her decision, spite. Her law is eternal truth, her kindness is God's transparency, and her power, necessity. Look around you, O friend and carefully see as the wise man sees. What must pass away, passe s away; what can endure, endures; what will happen, does happen. The sisters of Fate are cheerful and are not pale, ghastly Furies. A thread without end is be-



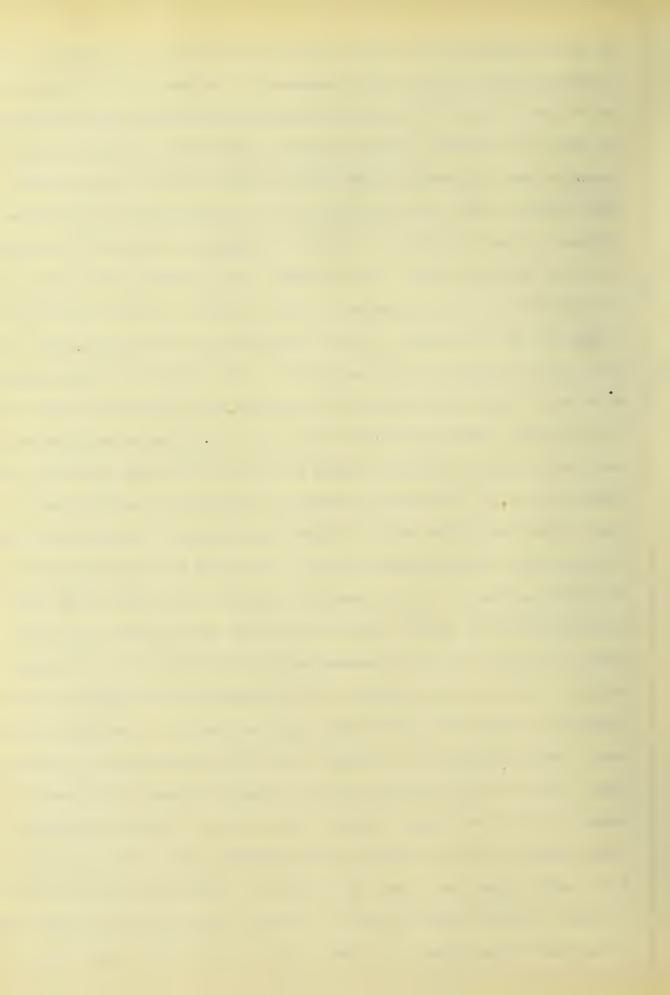
For since Pallus sprang youthfully from her father's head, she is working the golden veil which with the festival of all the stars shines up there eons long.

And the Fates' glance hangs continually on the masterly work. Wisdom, Power, and Goodness weave in the life of the worm and angel (man) Truth, Harmony, and Happiness. Call not Faith cruel, call not her decision envy. Her law is eternal Truth; her goodness, God's transparency; and her power, necessity."

In a poem called "Die Dämmerung" is brought out a thought which occurs in a great many other poems which we shall not have space to mention. It is that although we hope, yet our hoping is dim and uncertain because of the impossibility of absolute knowledge of the beyond. Yet this very veil, this sweet illusion, is a boon to mankind. The poem is as follows: "Ether and Love were the oldest high divine pair. They brought forth the immortal ones, Heaven and the Blessed. And deeper in the realm of clouds their race became like the clouds. They, eternally beautiful and eternally young begat for us the Twilight. Out of Light and Shadow they wove here man's delusive, deceptive existence. Only Twilight is our view, only Twilight is our fortune. The lovely morning-glow of youth hides from us what the day threatens. A zephyr which plays at evening cools the flowers after the sultry mid-day. Ear and eye like to be deluded; the heart beats in the future and wishes, and has wished, yet scarcely believes. For even its most beautiful fortune is only a dream. Hope, eternally beautiful and young is also a child of Dämmerung. Her sister, too, Longing, loves the veil which envelops Love. I thank thee, thou who dost hover about me that thou hast woven for me a veil. Yet, Love and Ether, lend me a shining pilgrim's dress." In another poem also called "Die Dammerung" we have, "To what profit is it to destroy the twilight's fragrance? to be ashamed of the shadow-friends? to drive away and hunt down the morning dreams and cause the youth to grow grey? Every thing is Illusion Delusion upon delusion! Fame is a shadow; delight in a maiden is always only rose-delight. O world, you sweet waste where nothing is and everything seems



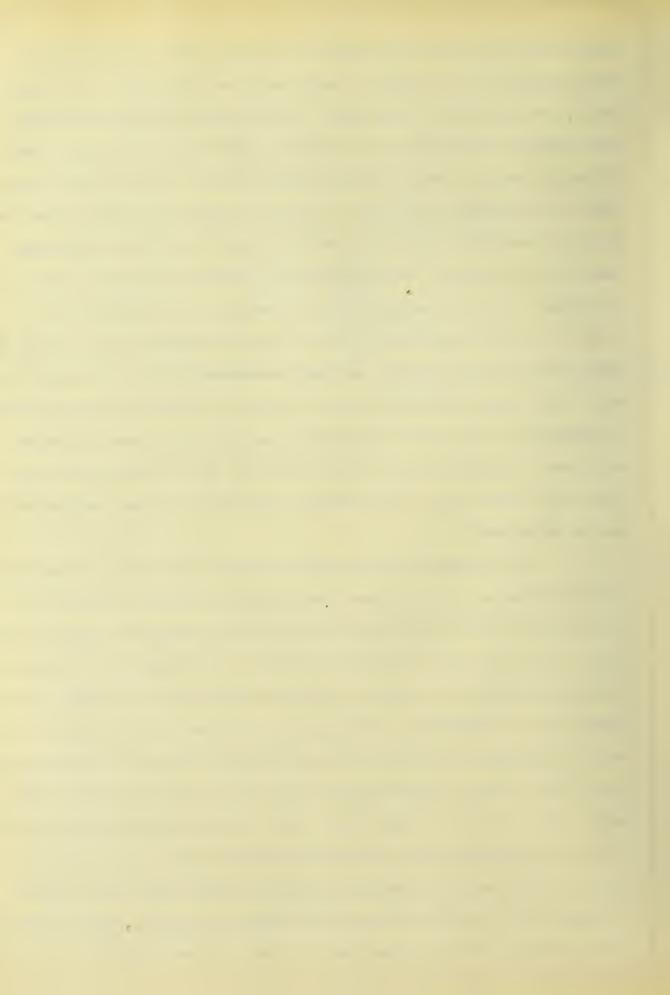
but yet seems beautiful and lovely, and you sweet deceivers, the senses. Give me always clouds if there is only cloud-manna." The idea is that it is natural and God-given for man to hope and build upon his dreams even though reality may not back up his illusion. In "Süsser Wahn" we also have, "Who would not dig for himself a grave and joyfully throw off the burden of life if it were not for sweet Illusion? Take from me Illusion, and even Psyche deceives and deludes. O friend, who would not dig his own grave and gladly cast off life's burden were it not for sweet Illusion." "Die Göttergabe" is a beautiful poem in which is the same thought of the blessedness of hopeful illusion. "Now you son of Illusion receive from me the bandage. It will rejoice you more than anything else. Much will I give thee when I present you with it. Sweet delusion and lovely imaginings which pass for more than truth and an evergrowing, new longing which bathes and fills the soul; dreams are hidden in the soul. Friend, you scarcely yet recognize them. Hopes with each new morning are for you a new dream of youth. Wise blindness it is not to see what you would not see joyfully; sobriety, not to look to find the mistakes which the charm hides from you. Forbearance lies in the bandage and rest and patient waiting. Take it and be happy like the child or it is your own fault." What a beautiful thought is this last, for how care-free and optimistic is the child. And if we would look into the matter far enough we would find at least one of the reasons for this optimism to be its tremendous activity; always busy at something. So, in Herder we have brought out very explicitly the thought that man's highest happiness consists in activity, in hard work. "Das Kind der Sorge" to my mind is one of the most beautiful of Herder's poems. "Care sat one day by the side of a murmuring stream. While there in a dream of thought, her fingers moulded a form of clay. 'What have you there, musing goddes?' asked Zeus, who just then approached her. 'A form of clay which I have made. I pray you, 0 god, give it life.' 'Well then, let there be life-it lives! Let this creature be mine.' But Care said, 'No, let it be mine, lord, for my fingers have formed it.' 'But I gave life to the clay,' said Zeus. As



taken the child out of my womb.' 'Well,' said Zeus, 'Wait, there comes judge Saturn, let him decide.' Saturn said, 'Let all three have it, for thus high Fate decrees. You who did give it life, take when it dies, its spirit; you, Tellus, its body for that is all that belongs to you. To thee, O Care, its mother, it is given during its life. So long as it breathes you shall never leave it. It is your child. Like you it will from day to day weary its life away, even down to the grave.' Destiny's decree is fulfilled and this creature is called man. In life he belongs to Care, in death, to the earth and God."

In the opening part of "Das erträumte Paradies" we have a rather biblical account of Eden, the fall, and man's subsequent history. "They murdered
many a noble pious Abel and built up to the sky in a masterly way many a Babel.
You children of Adam, up and away from the long atoned-for deceit. A narrow
path leads to happiness. Up! Again to the plow! New vigor will come to you
again out of mother earth. Only activity, only toil is our lot; only as workmen are we brothers."

In "Das Glück" we have again the theme of happiness as the natural result of industry. "I do not kneel before the blind goddess' chariot, who, scattering crowns, travels there with black horses, and even she who is born on light wings is not worthy of one confidential prayer. Let my happiness be she whose throne is with truth, the rudder of stirring, active Reason in her hand; she who awards to quiet industry which dwells with her, the most excellent gifts. Out of her rich cornucopia she presents to industry fruits which his own healthy courage grants him. The most beautiful pearls glisten on his face as reward of toil, and 0, they are worth more than crowns. She it is who daily scatters on him flowers, and the multitude of his children skip together about the throne of her, the bearer of the flowers. He receives from her hand many flowers which rejoice his heart, but lastly the soft poppy which brings to him sound, ambrosial sleep such as the wheel of the restless does not know. Instead of pearls, she scatters

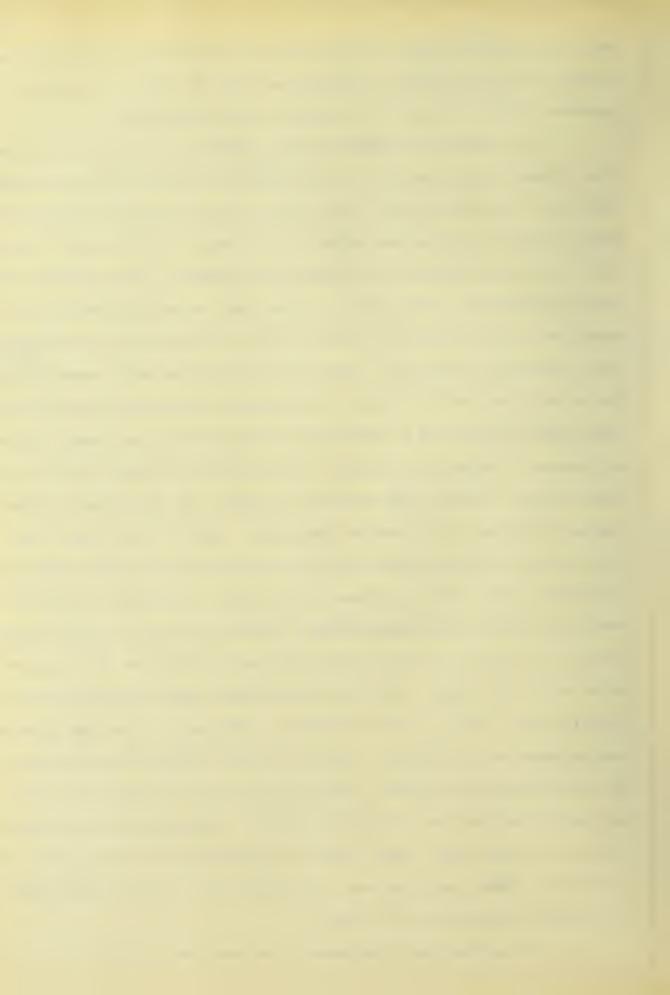


often tears, for it is hard to separate envy and trouble from the yellow gold.

O Fortuna respiciens, sister of Prudence and Fidelity, only give back to me the happiness of youth, and my time, and myself, O thou good one."

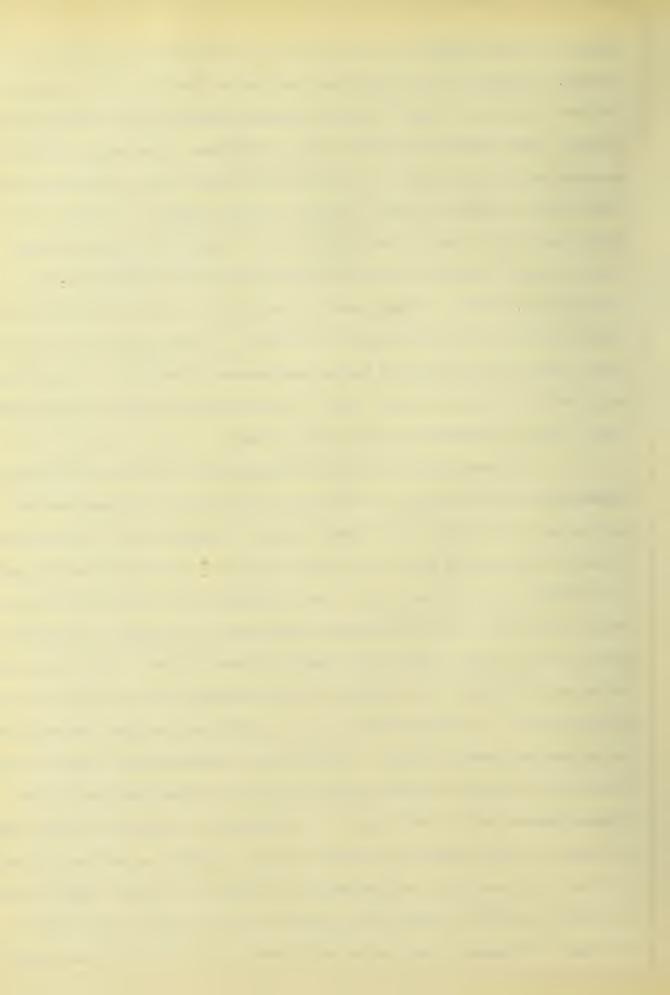
The thought of activity is still continued in "Der Strom des Lebens". "Flow, stream of life, you go by in waves where in alternating height one buries the other. Task follows task. Yet do I know of any sweeter joy than that which comes from having overcome some danger or having completed some task? To live is life's reward, and feeling is its eternal prize of battle. Flow, stream, full of waves; be nowhere a stagnant pool." In the poem "An sein Tagewerk", also is the conception of life's happiness coming from labor, from doing good and improving every opportunity. Herder says, "Come O come, staff of my life, comrade which from my early years walked with me. Come sweet toil, and up and down the hill of life, conduct the steps of a wanderer who often grows weary, and lags. Aimless and homeless, I wander in the wastes. O work, be thou my leader, so that in the bosom of repose I may not rest unworthy of my life. For the weakness of idle diversion is disgrace, it is Tantalus' punishment. Aim at what you will, 0 my spirit, and you will find at the goal which has been reached with difficulty, thy blunted arrow. Life's happiness is life's toil. How warmly it stirs us with creative power and consciousness of self. Therefore, as the life fluid springs in you, be resolute and no enemy shall jostle your arm when you let the arrow fly as the sport of the winds. Only before death tears it away from you and while you still beat. O heart, -- for thou dost not always beat -- feel life pulsating; have influence and do something, O spirit, for soon it will be evening around me. The soul closes like the flower. Tender clay of life, thou dost become stiff, and the life-pregnant germ of life will lie dead. Therefore, since I am still alive let me really live. Come, O staff of the wanderer! To do good with thee at my side is reward enough for me; it is life for me. For soon enough death and the grave command us to ---- rest."

We see that Herder had somewhat the same idea of the present oppor-

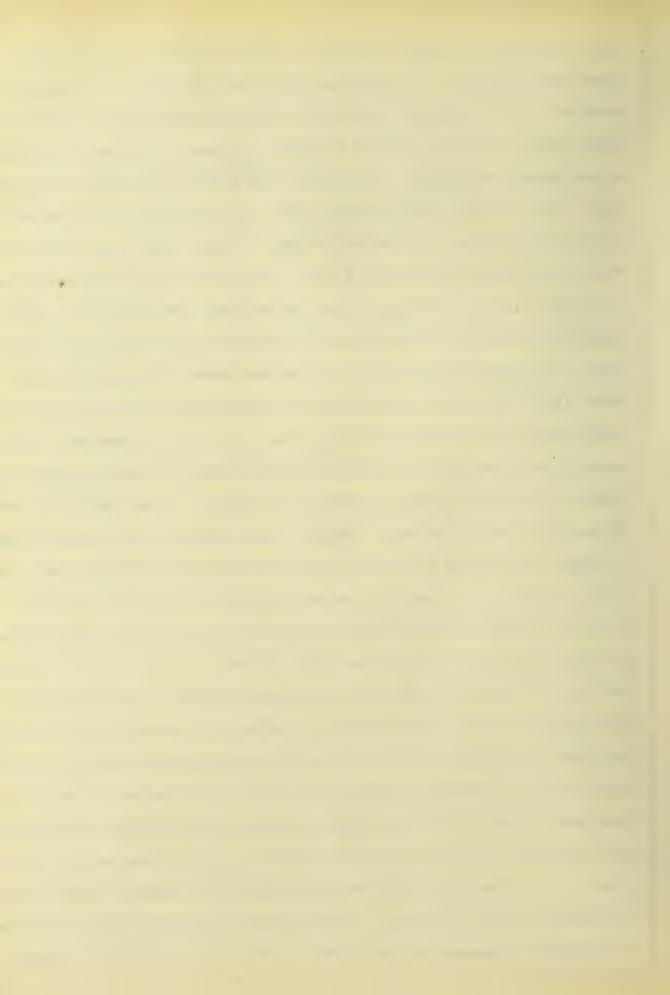


tunity as did the Ancients, that is, that she is bald behind and unless you seize her from the front by the forelock you have forever lost the golden opportunity, for when she has once turned to go you can never seize her. In "Lied des Lebens" he sings, "More fleeting than wind or wave, flees time. What detains it? To make immediate use of it, to seize it quickly on its course; that, my brothers, stops the floating, retards the flight of days. Of quick passage is our life. Let us strew roses on it, roses, for days sink into the misty sea of wintry old age, roses, for they bloom and shimmer still, here, around us, to right and left. Roses stand on every branch, on every beautiful deed of youth. Well for him who, up until the snows of life, has lived his life pure. O days, become for us a garland which surrounds the grey haired temples and blossoms around them in fresh renewed splendor as a dream of youth. Even the bitter flowers cool us with rest doubly sweet, and the loud breezes play us into Paradise."

The poems which we shall now consider give us the basis of Herder's ethics, psychology, theology, in fact his whole philosophy. If there ever was any one who tried to fathom this great problem of the human soul, it was Herder. We shall try to see how well he has solved it or at last has laid bare the soul as he himself said he wished to do. His investigations as to what man is, certainly contain all the facts which later psychology or philosophy have ever been able to bring to light. Herder felt deeply the need for such a search for truth. In the wonderful poem, "Der Mensch", we have him saying, "What is man? Tell me, you who are men." He then proceeds to ask the youth and the aged, but receives no satisfactory answer from them. He then goes to those who call themselves wise, but he will not find it out from them, for as he says, "Der gelehrte Thor der grösste Unmensch sei". Then he goes to the bedside of a dying man on whose lips is already the cold moisture of death, and says, "I charge you tell me what you feel and I will carry thy true last word in my heart as in marble; what you were and what I am from the cradle to the grave and from the grave to the beyond. He speaks -- O listen -- yet, no, he only stammers, talks about wooden crosses--



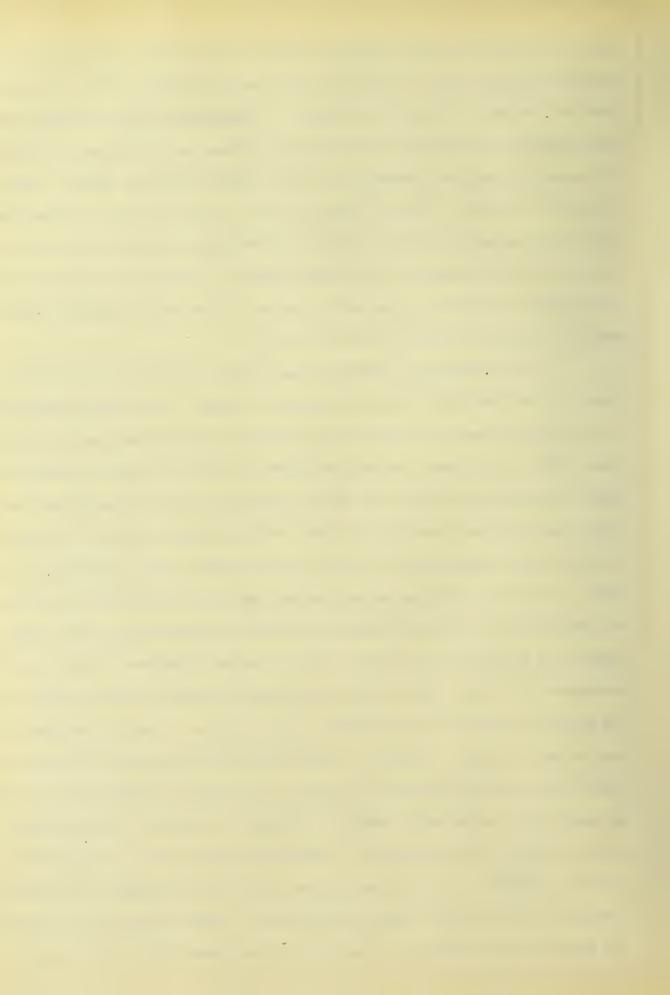
and -- infirmities -- cowls -- Paradise -- who knows what he says, his tongue grows stiff, he dies. O, not from the dying, nor from priests, nor from the wise, so-called, nor from those on the throne do I find out what I seek. O fool, look within thine own heart. So out of the clamor and noise of the world I want to collect myself into myself -- see myself -- and what I saw, stammer for my brethren." This certainly gives us Herder's aim. Let us turn now to what he has told of his investigations. In "Die Menschenseele" we have, "What shall I call that which hovers over the human soul, a seal of God, and weaves its depths, which no one can count, into one pattern? I went and made wide investigations. I saw the plant suck blood out of the dew and become what it is from the sunshine and the moist, wild meadow. I saw that tree so tall and strong and green which feels within itself eonian life, and strives with its roots and branches to continue having part in the great nature-weaving, even to the end of blossoming. I saw the multitude of animals, the heavenly sparks of high Divinity sunken ineffably down here into earthly night to scatter light into it. Then he calls the suns of that night, worlds, but says he wishes to know souls more than worlds. Then he seems to have a sort of vision in which he does not see Divinity itself, for it is intangible, but he says, "I saw the heights and depths of the soul, its essence, its deep development from light to light, from the dull, misty viewing of things here on the dark earth until face to face ---- ." Then as if it were too sacred a thing even to mention, he continues, "O, do not call by name that which hangs over souls, a veil of God, and moulds their innumerable depths into His image. In "Fragment eines Lobgesanges an die menschliche Seele", we have a setting forth of Herder's conception of what might be called the texture of the human soul, although that does not quite convey the idea because it is too mater-"Instead of creatures of air and heaven I praise the human soul, the creaial. tress. It has chosen for itself an earthly body and has manifest itself in the grandeur and beauty of the gods. Wander among the stars and suns and look and tell me which is greater, suns or thyself. What seems to you a clod of earth,



world united by the soul. And who is it who could count the forces of the soul which strive thru this earthly structure. Omnipresent, all-enlivening like a sun, as queen the soul rules and feels and continues on till the end of worlds."

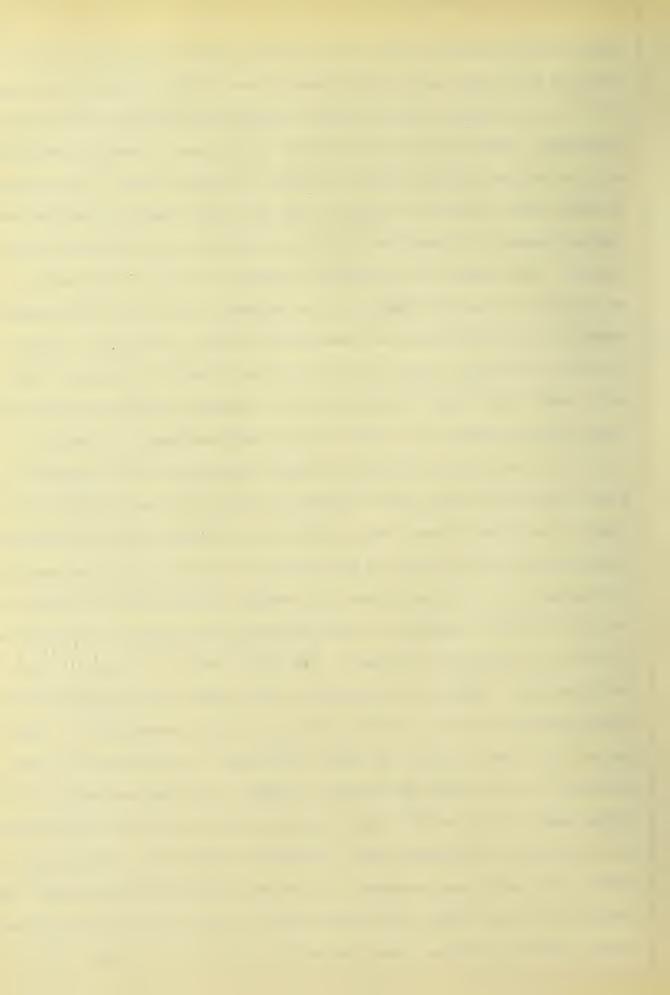
In a short poem called "Fragment" the soul's creative power is shown. "What, am I spirit! I spirit! -- Then am I God! I think, I will, I am it. As God, thru whom I am, once called spirits out of spirit-nothingness, and bodies out of bodychaos, so I called thoughts out of thought-chaos. I will it --- and out of the nothingness are created actions and influences. O God, what thou didst grant to me! All thy world I create in me after Thee."

In "Lobgesangs", Herder touches on the physiology of the blood at the time of strong feelings, whether of pleasure or anger. Yes, he had observed this--- a thing which men in a much later day thought they had discovered for the first time. Then he continues, "And who would want to count the seething images of the soul; the images which now as out of the springs of the abyss, emit fire, and now gently and softly melt away like the tear which glistens in the eye of love and then flows down beautifully as it dies. Great thoughts strive upward as seas of flame. The soul in thinking has become God, has gained a paradise above the stars has subjugated all the blue expanses of eternity, has made for herself a host of angels, and there rules as Divinity. Yet, in order to embrace a friend, she has discovered the world. Then she has swung herself up above death and melted into the glance of Him who saw in One, All, and in All, One. " Thus we have Herder's idea of man as divine. He came as a spark from Divinity; while in the body he rules over the world by means of the queen of his soul, he mingles with the All in other souls, and at death returns as Divinity into the All. The same idea is also expressed in "Die Schöpfung". "New creation, how shall I call you? God of creation, teach me. -- Yet I indeed am the one to whom this image of God came .--I as God! My soul enters itself and thinks me. Creates itself and acts freely, and feels as free as Jehovah. I as God! My heart beats with the courage of



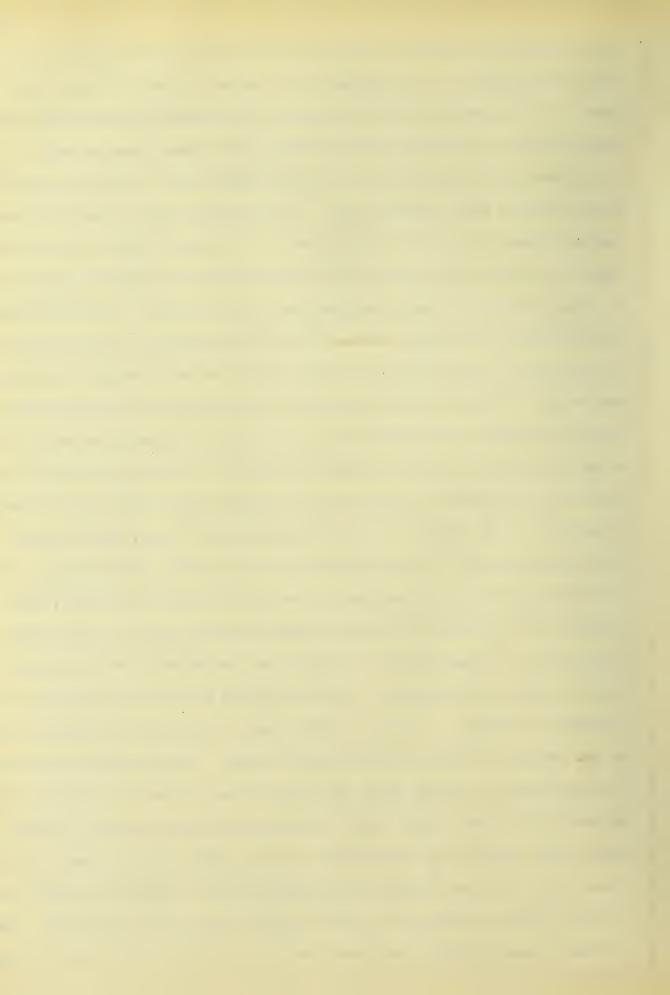
kings and with a brother's pain. All life here unites and man feels himself the friend of All. Sense feels full of sympathy even in the plant, and in the goal of all human divinity it refines itself lovingly far and wide, and always deeper and higher." Here is the idea of gradation in the power of sensation beginning with the very least form of life and reaching its climax in man. "I am the one in which creation reached its limit; I who spring into everything and feel everything in myself. My sense feels, tastes and reaches even to the very least of creation. The harmony of all creation is within me -- yes, I myself am it. I am the one God-sound which out of all the rapturous song af all creation sounded upward and entered God's ear and became image, thought, and being -- became man. The plan of creation, O man, is in thyself. Feel thyself, and creation feels itself. Feel thyself, then thou dost feel God in thyself. God feels himself in thee, as sun and animal do not feel, and He terminates Himself in Himself."

Herder, in the wonderful dialogue "Schwungkräfte der Menschheit", gives us along with other ideas on poetic art, etc., his idea of those faculties which act as forces in human beings, which make man to excel all other forms of creation and be able to order his sensations most highly. The persons speaking are represented by A, B, and C, and it is easily recognized that C is Herder himself, the other two being used to help him bring out his ideas, and the poem is so good that we shall give the whole. "A) Time makes men; it alone is that which humanizes. What were our ancestors, what are we? and O, how much broader vision posterity will have, and how much more will they accomplish! B) Right and well, my friend, yet what are times without men? As time makes us, so we make time. One man boldly goes before centuries; one strong man makes centuries, which, except for his soul's courage and energy would have left the world as it was, a nest full of children, fools, and beasts. Times change nothing without forces. Thru men is man humanized. C) And who makes both times and men? Who awakened that great, noble man who went before his time? Who gave him courage, advice, thoughts, volition, power, and action? Who kindled his heart so that it



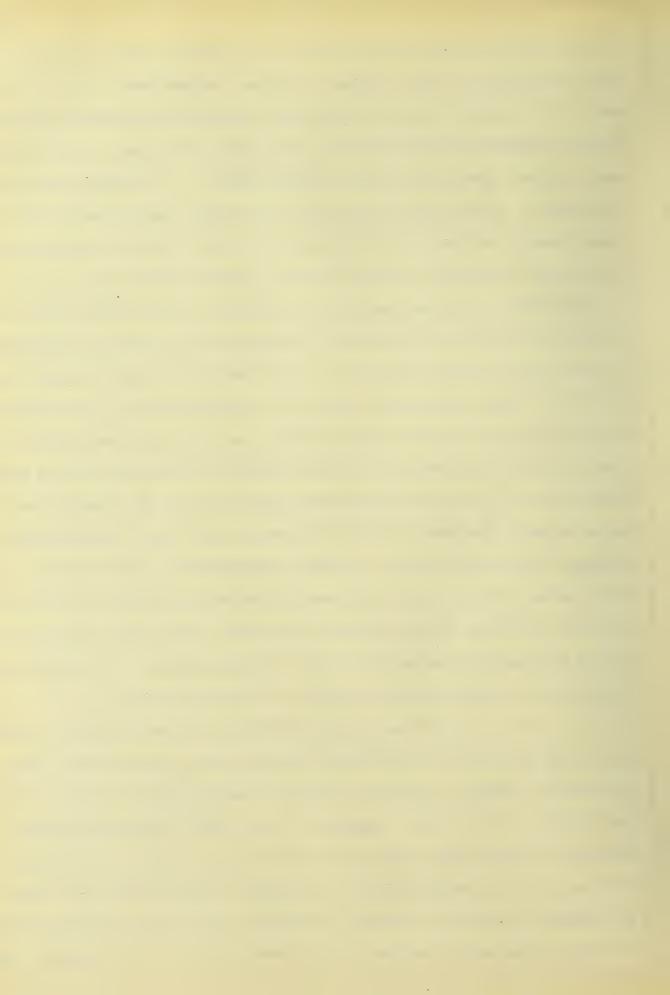
would not shudder at danger, who gave him a free, broad view and a firm foot to stand and to step far over the abyss? He it was who up there in heaven leads the stars in eternal round-dances, who calls out of the night the morning-glow and sends the flash of lightning out of the cloud. He awakens times and men.

- A) Old fable that! The state and laws have matured him. Religion is our police and her servants are a standing army. B) And then who made states? Who devised laws and wisdom? Was it the standing army? A) A double hunger it is, a double impulse, the stomach and passion, thru these the universe of humanity gravitates.
- B) Yes, gravitates -- down to the earth and to the animals. O excellent human race whose spirit and heart problems lives in the diaphragm! That gravitates.
- C) You friends, leave off this meaningless empty quarrel of words. Man is more than animal. If hunger and that ever-stirring sexual passion were the driving wheels of the human crowd, then robbery is the lot of the hungry and war of the lustful, but order, the state and marriage, never. Laws are the children of wisdom, not of the stomach; and respect for law, that respect which, for the sake of mankind, hazards happiness and even life itself is a finer, nobler impulse and no blind passion. The most active men were always the least indigent. In that land where they do not eat, neither marry or are given in marriage, where no standing army, no despotic, arbitrary statute prevails, there we look forward with anticipation to the most blessed of all states. And whoever down here thinks and acts as a genius, he humanizes; for to look at him is light and to follow in his footsteps is blessing. A) That's a pious ideal! The blossoms of humanity bloom out set one after the other and then cease to bloom. Poetry dreamed herself backward and forward in blessed times. But alas, it was a dream, for Eloquence seized men and it called order (mere outer form of poetry) under the name of law (the inner or that which, by the true nature of poetry, governs it), then real orators became silent. At last Hairsplitting dreamed out a new possibility, namely, reason, and because one spider ate up the other they tore away the silken web. What does there remain left for the wiseman except bare history? What cannot become,



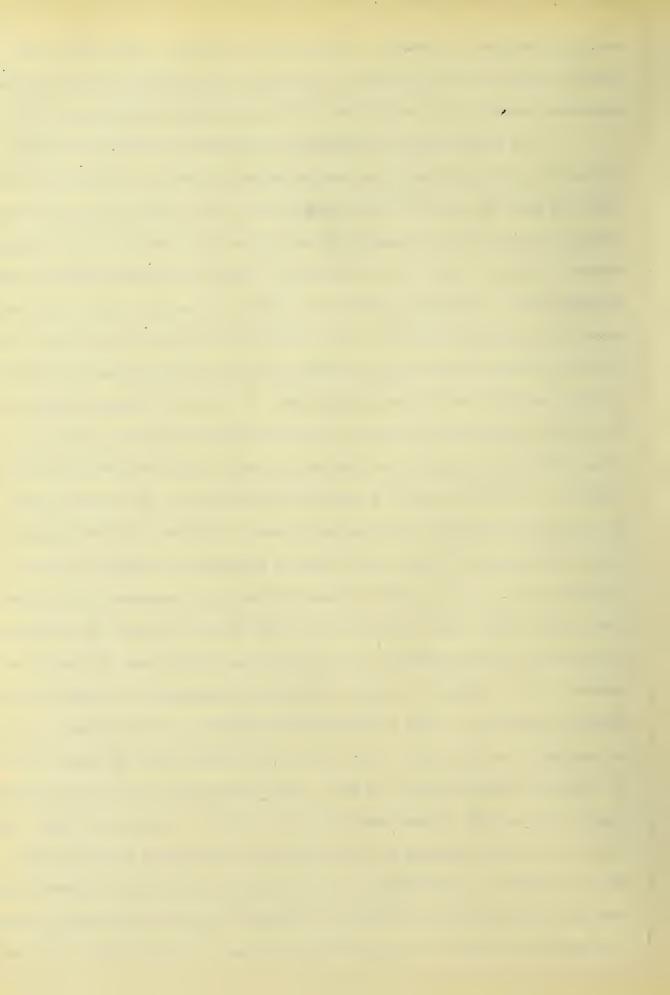
does not; and what could become, did become. C) And will become. We hope so at least, and indeed thru nobler impulses than those you mentioned. A) What nobler ones? B) The poetic art which whines about past times was whimpering poetry -and that eloquence which only excited, it was false gift-of-gab. And that spinster, Sophistry, just like cloister-religion, coerces. C) Friends, leave off this quarrel. The holy fire on the altar of the Eternal in our breast; true eloquence, wisdom, and poetic art which kindles this fire so that it may burn purer and brighter for mankind, and every art which promotes better times, they all are from holy Nature and eternal Truth which is capable of thousand-fold changes and yet constantly the same. The blossoms of humanity bloom according to centuries; a garden planted around here and there, here blooming out in more beautiful splendor and there again rejuvenated, but its root is undying (that is, the blossom may die but the bush and roots are still alive, so the roots of real Truth are eternal though at some periods its representatives do not appear) and what Reason knows now, she did know; what happens now becomes history both of animals and men. Let us be men!" Then comes the whole conclusion in the words, "Der Menschheit Schwingen sind Verstand und Herz, und ihre Schwungkräfte Reiz und Grazie." We should notice that with Herder, Understanding and Feeling always go hand in hand, the one not developed to the detriment of the other. What a great and noble ideal but how few, seemingly, are able to hit upon the happy medium. We should not be entirely cold, calculating Reason, neither all emotion or feeling.

The two short lines entitled "Schiffahrt", contain the great thought that as one needs wind and a steersman in order to make a successful boat trip, so one must have happiness and Reason in order to make the course of life a success. And what wind is to the ship, happiness is to our life -- a propelling force. But just as the ship, even though it has good wind might wander about and yet reach no particular destiny without the steersman or guiding force, so we must have Reason to control our emotions or instincts so that we may not float aimlessly about in life and get nowhere. In "Die Menschennature" we have again brought

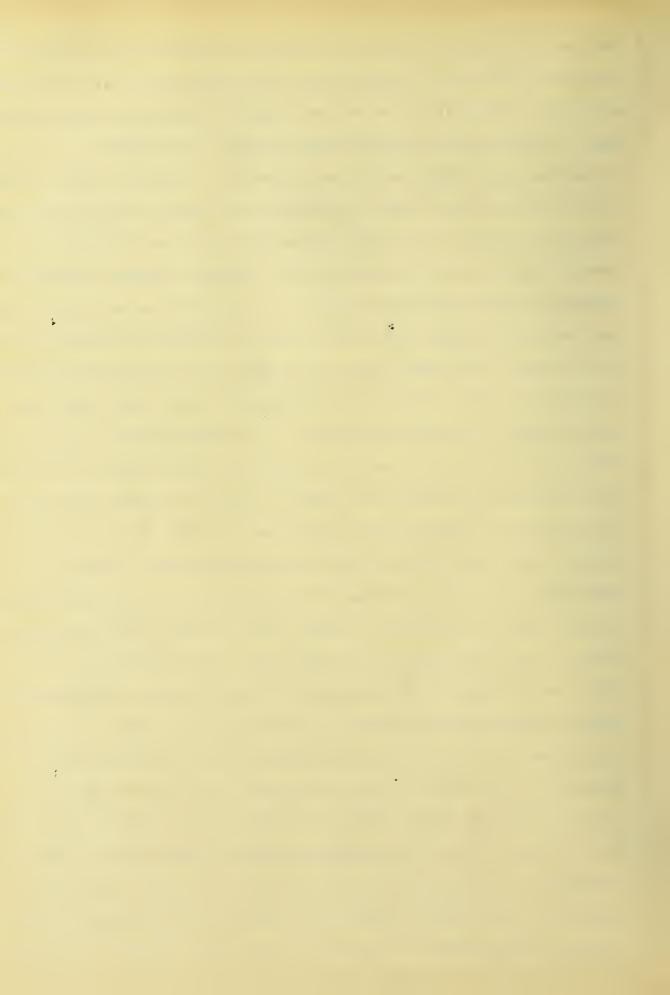


out the importance of Vernunft. "Noble are man's senses; nobler still, his spirit, higher still man's volition, but Reason is the highest of all, for she determines herself and is victor over volition, spirit and sensation."

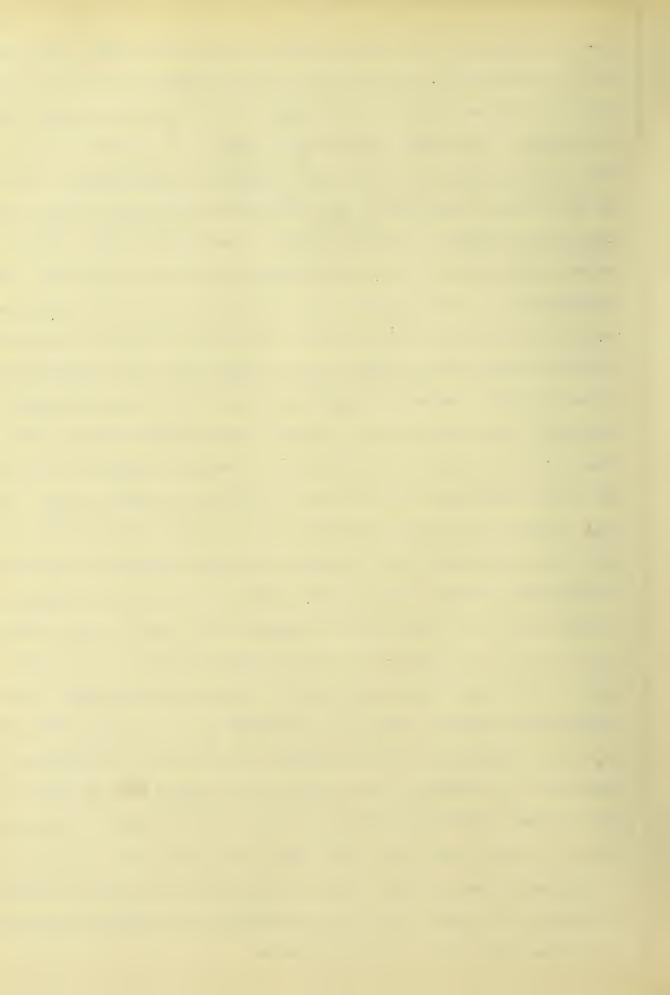
We come now to the poems which are perhaps the most difficult for the English-born person to understand because Herder uses words to express his ideas which are just the opposite of our english words. For example, the word Personlichkeit with Herder would mean the lesser life we live, one perfectly legitimate because necessary -- such as the obtaining of food, drink; preservation of life, property, etc. Yet this very side of our nature, the material side, is in great danger of being paid entirely too much attention and herein is the error. The body with its needs and varying fortunes brings only discontent and pain unless a highly developed soul in man predominates. On the other hand the English way of looking at personality has come to mean the highly developed, inner self, something which cannot be put on as a garment but which shines out from an inner soul condition. We talk of a great personality and we mean not one dressed so and so, or one who is necessarily handsome, but a person, the force of whose character you can feel simply by being in his presence regardless of whether he says or does anything or not. It is a sort of silent influence or atmosphere which is exhaled from a great soul. Again, Herder uses the word Selbst in almost the same sense as we would use Persönlichkeit, while self with us conveys more the idea of selfishness, or that tendency to think of one's own interests and let those of our brother go unheeded; a lack of sympathy and kindness to others because of being so absorbed in selfish gain. But we shall try and give these two poems "Das Ich" and "Selbst" and get Herder's own idea of what they mean to him and then follow them by the poem "Die Entzauberung" which is a sort of solution of both. The poem "Das Ich" gives perhaps most clearly Herder's biological philosophy and contains somewhat the following: "O friend, if you wish to come to peace, flee from thy worst enemy, Personlichkeit. It deludes you with misty dreams, narrows your spirit and heart, and torments you with cares; it infects your blood and



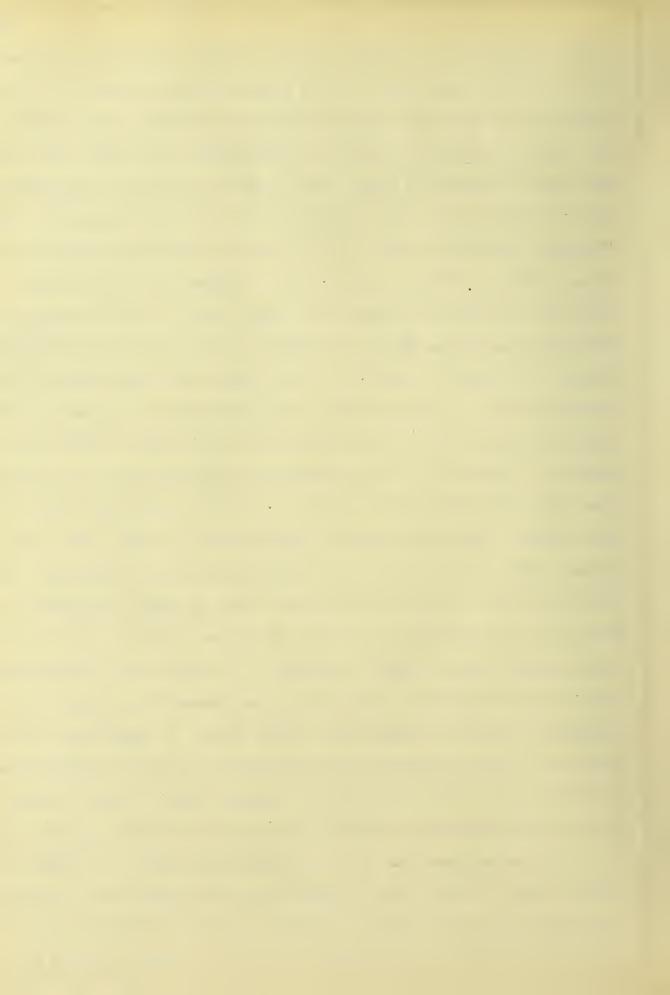
robs you of the free air so that you, drying up in yourself, die of suffocation from your own foul air. Hear now, what Personlichkeit is in you; as in your mother's womb you received life from two, and unconscious hung, as a plant, near the heart of your mother and then was brought forth as a human child, or, as they say, you saw the light of day. But you did not see it. It saw you, rather, as you yet for a long time were a part of your mother, and drank her breath, her kisses. and at the life-spring, her breast, you learned feeling and sensation. You were gradually separated from your mother and in a thousand forms and feelings the adjustment took place between the world and you, the always new and always changing one. How grew the child? There was a moving, an activity of its hands and feet, ears and eyes; it was always spying out and discovering something new; moulding and developing itself. And thus you developed into a boy, then a youth, then a man, and lastly an aged, grey-haired man. In the youth what was there yet of the child? and in the boy, what was there already of the middle-aged or of the old man? with each age you exchanged yourself. No part of the body, either form, spirit, feeling, or imagination, was any longer the same. You were deceived in yourself. Your mirror even revealed to you another new form. Did you, as a youth long for your mother's breast? When love entered your life, did you look upon your bride as your mother or sister? When the dream of honor tore you away (that is, that gallant period in a youth's life when he would like to do something great and daring to win honor) did you wish to be back in swaddling-clothes? Does the sugar-pear taste to you as it did when you were a child? In the inner world of emotions and of clear, unbeclouded imagination, and of the aspect of all things is it yet the same to you as it was when you were a boy? Take heart! Life is a stream of changing forms; wave drives wave which it raises and then buries; the same stream, and yetat moone moment is it any longer the same in any one place or in any one drop from its source even to the sea. And is such a phantom-like form to be your ground work or basis for duty and hope, for your happiness and misfortune? Do you wish to rely on such a shadow? and to such an



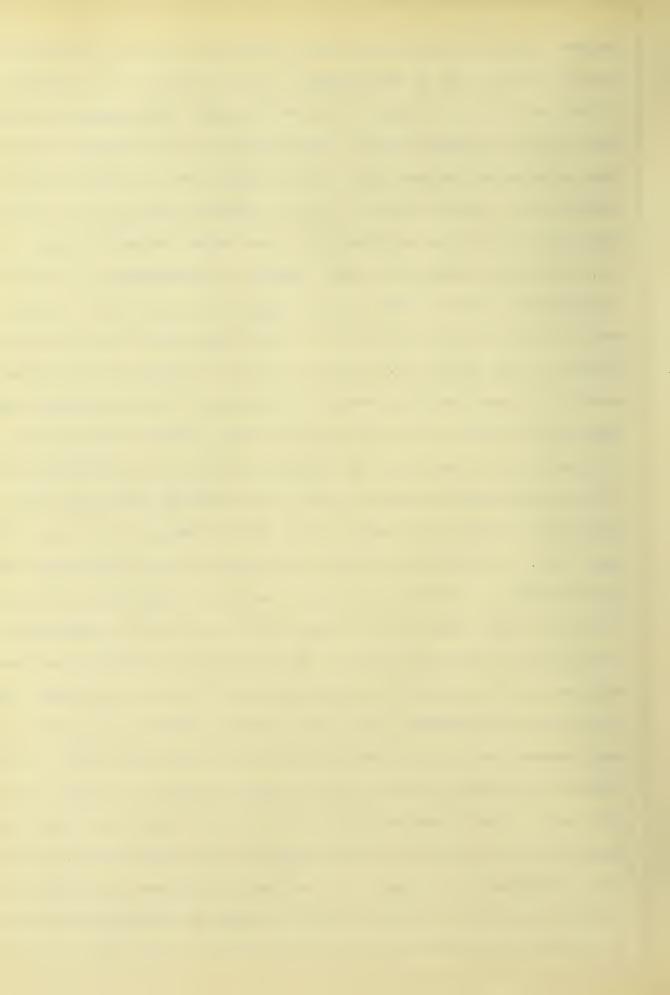
illusive form dedicate the thoughts, actions, and aim of your life? Take courage! No, you do not belong to yourself, but to the great, good All. You have received from it not only what is yours, but yourself. For see, you lie an eternal child at the breast of this mother and hang near her heart. If separated from all life which surrounded you and still surrounds, nourishes, and refreshes you, what would you be? Kein Ich. Every drop in your life fluid, every corpuscle in your blood, every stirring thought in your mind and heart, your aptitude, habit, decision, and action; a mechanism, which even when exercising and using you do not know. Every word from your lips, every feature of your face is a possession which you have received from someone other than yourself, handed down to you only for your use. So, always changing and continually changed, sneaks this owner* of other's property thru the world. And as the ever-restless tread of times presses upon him, and as the great mother forms his heart and head, his feeling and reason, he lays aside his mode of dress, his habits of life; he changes his speech, his manners and notions accordingly. What one of your ten thousand thoughts is yours? The kingdom of Genii as one great indivisible ocean, as a stream and as drops, as a whole and as individuals, flowed also into you and gave form even to that characteristic which seems most individualistic. What one of your ten ten thousand feelings is your own? Love, distress, mimicry, habits, time, and space, vexation and ennui. have all been imparted to you and poured upon you that you in your alay might form them anew for the great, good All. Yes, for the better All. To this end strives envy, desire, passion, every instinct of living nature, every yearning wish and longing, activity and curiosity, and admiration, the bride-love and mother-love, so that from the inner germ the bud may unfold the flower, and then the flower, withering, may bloom again into a thousand fruits. Air and sun, night and day, all promote this great process of the eternal All. The Ich dies in order that the whole may be. What is it that you with your poor Ich, bequeath to posterity? Your name? Let his name be Raphael; even in Raphael's paintings * In another draft Herder uses the word Robber.



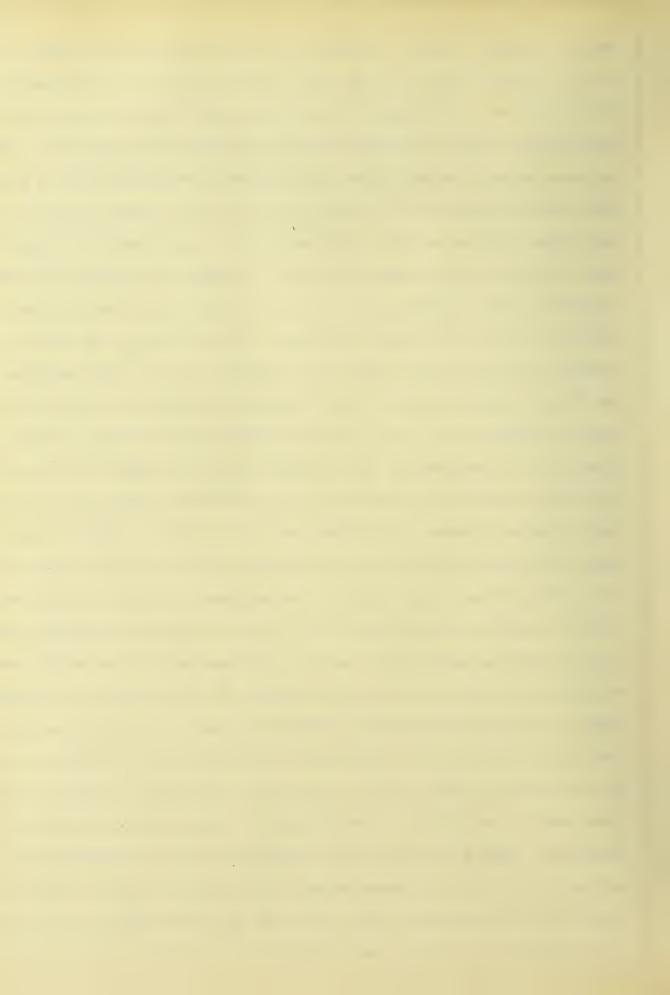
I like to forget the man, the name, and cry enraptured, 'An angel has painted it.' Your Ich? How long can or how long will posterity call you by name? and is it the fault of the name? They call also with your name Mavius, Bavus, Claudius, etc. Only if forgetful of the narrow Ich, your spirit lives in all souls, your heart beats in thousands of hearts, then are you an eternal one, an all-effecting, an all-influencing One, a god, and also as God an invisible, nameless One. Personlichkeit, that paltry thing, if it is stamped on one's work, destroys even in the best work the universal, eternal genius, that great life of immortality. So let us then in action and in disposition, temper our Ich so that the better thou, and he and we and you may gently exterminate it. and may free us from the wicked rudeness of the austere, cruel Ich. In every duty let our first thought be forgetfulness of self. In this way only, does our work succeed, and sweet is every deed which taking us away from lazy Pride makes us free, great, eternal, and alleffecting. Swallowed up in the wide labyrinth of striving ones, let our spirit be one tone in the choral-song of creation; our heart, one living wheel in the work of nature. When at some time my genius lets sink the torch, then I pray it for many things, only not for my Ich. For with what would it present me? The child? the youth? or the grey-haired old man? They are gone, and joyfully do I drink the cup of forgetfulness. No dream of some past misfortune, nor of some crippled game is going to profane my Elysium. I, as Decius did, consecrate myself to the gods with deep, heartfelt thanks and immeasurable reliance in the many-germed, rejuvenating nature which rewards richly. I, indeed, have not anything less to give her than what she herself gave me and which I acquired from her, namely, my poor Ich." Since the poem explains itself, we shall now pass on to probably the most sublime poem of all that Herder has written although they are all such masterpieces that one can hardly make any choice. In "Selbst" we have what might be called Herder's complete idea of the aim of life. It contains, to my mind, all the psychological or ethical code that one might ever need in life It extolls the spirit-life and reduces the material or earthly existence to a



minimum. Just as we have man as a whole considered as a sort of a microcosm in contrast with the world as the macrocosm, so now we have man in his two-fold makeup, body and spirit, and might call the Ich life, "der kleine Mensch", and the Selbst life. "der grosse Mensch". Herder starts out with the keynote. "Forget your Ich but never lose your Selbst. Rich Divinity from her heart can give you nothing greater than your Selbst. What ever elements flowed into you on your mother's breast and also on the breast of the great mother, animating nature. --air, ether, food, drink, motion, idea, thoughts, and imagination --- in that you are not Selbst. You are Selbst in what you made for yourself out of the All, and what you formed and became and now are. You are your creator and your creation. Not what you see, for even the animal sees; not what you hear, even the animal perceives; not what you learn, even the raven learns. What you understand and comprehend; the power which works in you; the inner prophetess which creates out of former ages, the coming age; the orderer, the directress who unravelling out of the entangle ments the skein of nature into a beautiful carpet both within and without you; in this you are Selbst. It is Divinity taking on your form. Divinity? Yes. For think with yourself of the chaos of beings without sense and spirit, without an all-filling one which is law both to itself and to the All. Consider the great irrationality of nature which is most rich in feeling and hurl yourself madly, insanely down into the desolate chaos which does not know itself. Would you then be a Selbst? No, I should say not. Back into your Selbst. In your innermost consciousness there lives a speaking instance of the highest Allconsciousness. Be an animal, lose your Selbst; and then do you wonder, O fool, that you lost Divinity with your Selbst? Harmony of beings -- an empty word without a hearer. Hear it deep in your own heart and your heart in its deepest stillness will with the full chorus of worlds name Him, the highest Selbst, mind and spirit, the Being of all beings, God. Now then, in your inner self, build for Divinity a temple where she may be pleased to dwell and communicate with you and in this temple will sound both loud and soft the voice of that Truth which is the



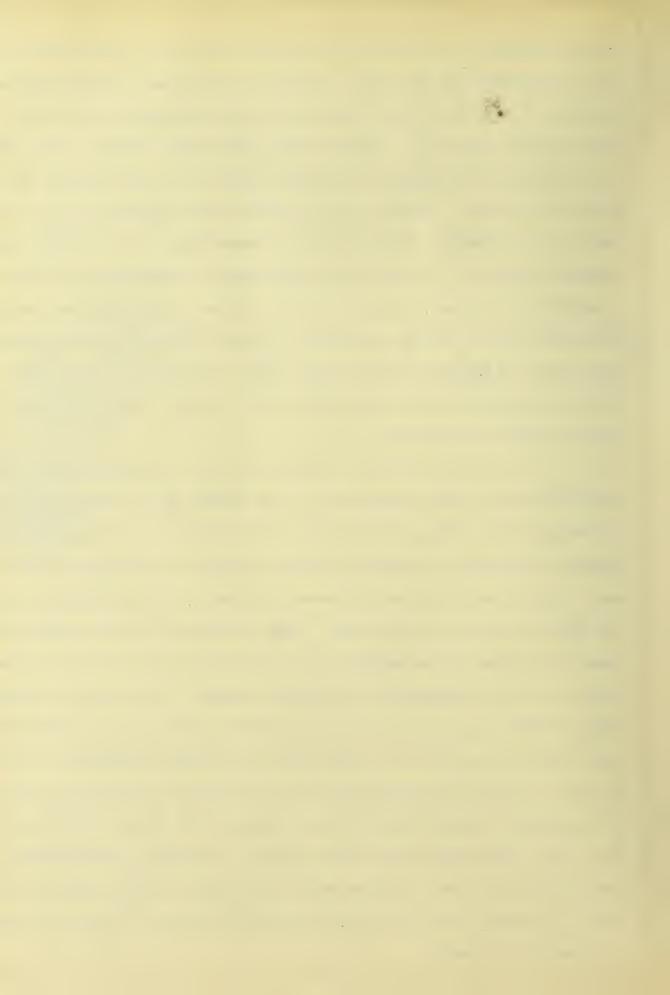
Selbst of beings. Up then! Recognize the voice, be priest of this truth, minister at its most holy altar and homor your Solbst and care for your divine Selbst within you, Reason. The hateful form which you, shuddering, see near you in the mirror of your life, that Fury who aroused you to envy, hatred and vanity, she who separated you from your highest ideals and with iron chains locked up your most friendly disposition. She was not you, but your worst enemy, robbing you of your Selbst. Did she not hinder your happiest joy, namely activity or effectiveness? Did she not put in opposition to you, the proud one, greater pride which overmastering you exasperated you so that you breathed with poison upon your finest fruits instead of with sweet fragrancy? Did she not put you at variance with yourself and make you only a phantom of yourself so that you sought and loved only the exterior, and desiring only it you lost your true Selbst that was within you? Deceived Narcissus, are you then what you smiled at in the spring? what you anxiously seek in every mirror? Is your shadow more than yourself? And do you wonder, you who live from the worst poison, your own exhaled breath, do you wonder that you become a shadow, a dry spring, the grave of yourself? Whoever lost his Selbst, what could he have without it? Whatever of us lives in the heart of others is our truest and deepest Selbst. Whatever makes us one with the wide world, whatever creates in us inward peace in the storm of time and teaches us to overlook and forget an injury done us and with gentleness and kindness explain how and why the fool is a fool --- is the great Selbst. That which incites and highly exalts our heart, unstimulated from without, it extends our wings far and holds them so that they rest in the storm above the currents of air as well as in the nest and beat more briskly upwards. That which in rest makes us busy and full of inner powers is astonished at outward thanks if its eye rests on the goal of the race-course. Who is it? A super-great Selbst, who carries thousands in his bosom pitying their distress; who turns darkness into light and carries in himself the great law of all blessedness: "What you do not wish should happen to you do not also to others, and what you wish to happen to you, do first to others." And who



is this human-god who has the feeling and power to wish and do that which is divine? An all-powerful, good Selbst. Talent is not the man; the spider weaves, bee the wasp and the build. Do not imagine that what the singer sings she feels, nor what the actor plays he is. A coward sneaks like a shadow thru the world, the fool dissipates, the voluptuary weakling goes along and flatters himself, the weak man trembles and dies. But who is it that feels himself immortal except an everlasting immortal Selbst? Ambrosia, fruit of immortality; you amaranthine arbors eternally blossoming in friedship and lasting gain, an invincible soul found you, a soul which did not say to play, 'thou art my father' nor to worms and corruption you are my brothers, sisters, and mother', but which calmly and quietly saw the grave before him but heaven above him and said, 'That which in me dies is not Selbst, but that which in me lives, my most live element, that part of me which is eternal, knows no destruction".

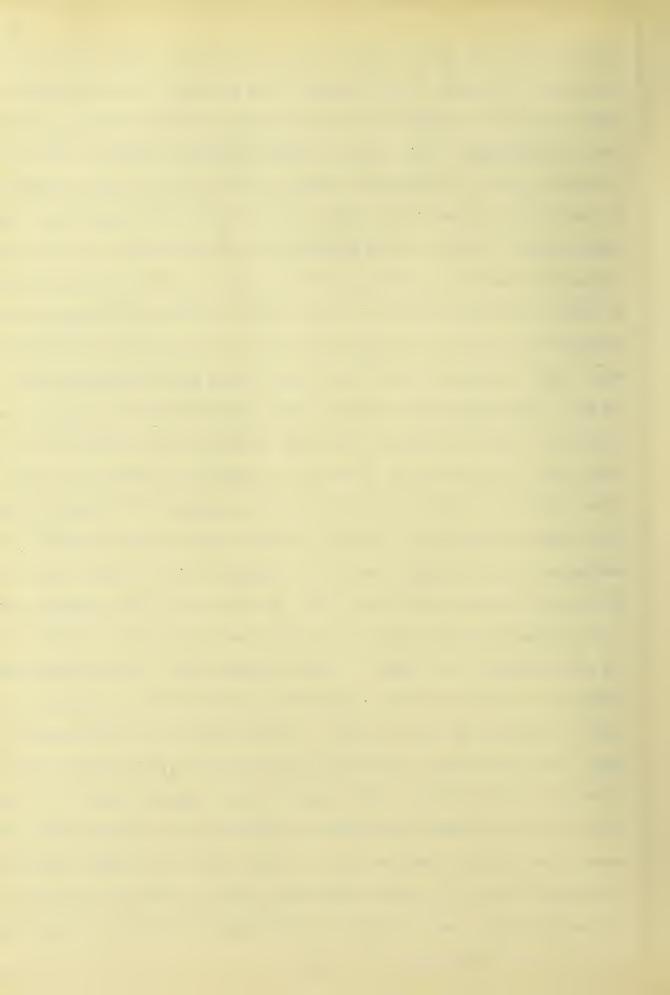
As a sort of solution or summing up we have "Die Entzauberung", "Subdue the thirst for outward possessions, O thou deluded man! Disenchant your reason and your heart. The gain which comes from deeds is the only thing which gives permanent satisfaction. Possessions, honors, and youth, all these time snatches away: they are mere delusions and vanigh in a moment. Become acquainted with the Eternal and grasp it in thy heart. Like a trembling water drop on the lotusflower life glides away unspeakably softly. Up then! Travel the ocean of the world in virtuous companionship and in quiet voyaging. Day and night, morning and evening, winter and spring, come and go. Thus time plays with us. Life flees away — and does the wind of thy expectations blow without restraint?" The thot is that, on account of the shortness of time we should not try to do so much and let our desires and expectations go to an extreme but do what we do well and calmly. "Think of the magic world of which you are a little part. Think whence you came, consider it often. The seven seas of the world, the eight original mountains will remain. Brahm, India, Sonne, Rudra, continue on. But not you nor I?

* Elements of the world.



Whether this or that people endure, does that worry you? In you, in me, and in every being is Wischnu. Foolish you are if you ever think that you have been injured by someone. See every soul in your own soul and let the delusion of Variable. ness be banished away. Also never set your affection too firmly on friend or foe, on brother or son. Be like-minded toward all, if you wish to attain the nature of the Eternal. Thy body is powerless, grey thy head; in thy right hand trembles the bamboo cane. And yet is the pitcher of thy desires unfilled? Do you want to dip out the ocean with your water-pot?" In other words, Herder would say that it is just as impossible ever to see all our wishes and desires fulfilled here on earth as it is to dip out the ocean, therefore we should build on eternal things which cannot pass away and let life be spent in love and in doing good to our fellow men. In the latter part of a short poem called "Des Menschen Herz", we have this idea. "Into one texture the gods wove joy and pain and invented out of it a human heart. O you poor heart, woven out of pleasure and sorrow, do you know what gives you life? Is it joy or is it sorrow? The goddess of love herself looked upon it with pity and said, 'O doubtful impulses which this heart received. In wishing only, and in longing, dwells its blessedness and even tears of joy go before to announce the coming sorrow. Up! Let my best gift, love, become a part of you! Let your invincible striving be love! O heart, let love be the life of your joy and sweetness of your pain. ' " In the beautiful poem, "Die Bestimmung des Menschen" we have about the same thought when the mother Nature, speaking of man, says, "Let his life be only in others. Let efficiency be his most beautiful reward. Let his descendants who give him thanks and honor, reward him for the scorn a brother may have given him. Thus united with all following times let his sweet toil strive on, and newly strengthened by adversities and disappointments, let it mount up ever taking in more and more. O mother queen, the weakest thing which one laments because he is only an individual, thou hast chosen for thyself in the All and united thru love and distress. Thou gavest us, O nature, thy mind and

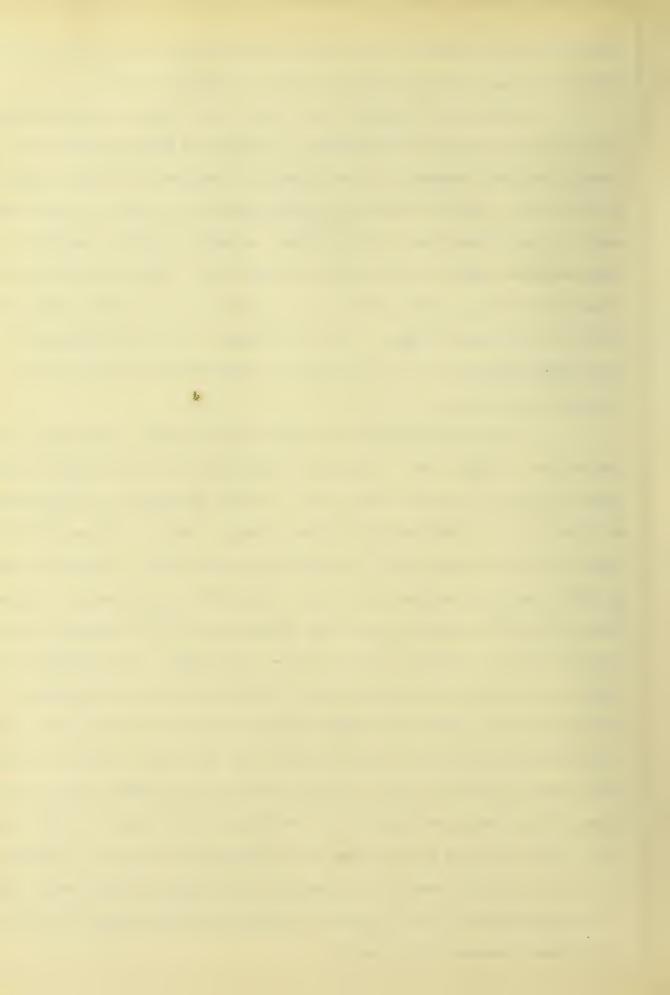
The divinity which sustains the world.



mother-heart, thy feeling for the greater and the greatest. The better and the best wakes in us continually and lives only in the Whole, the All."

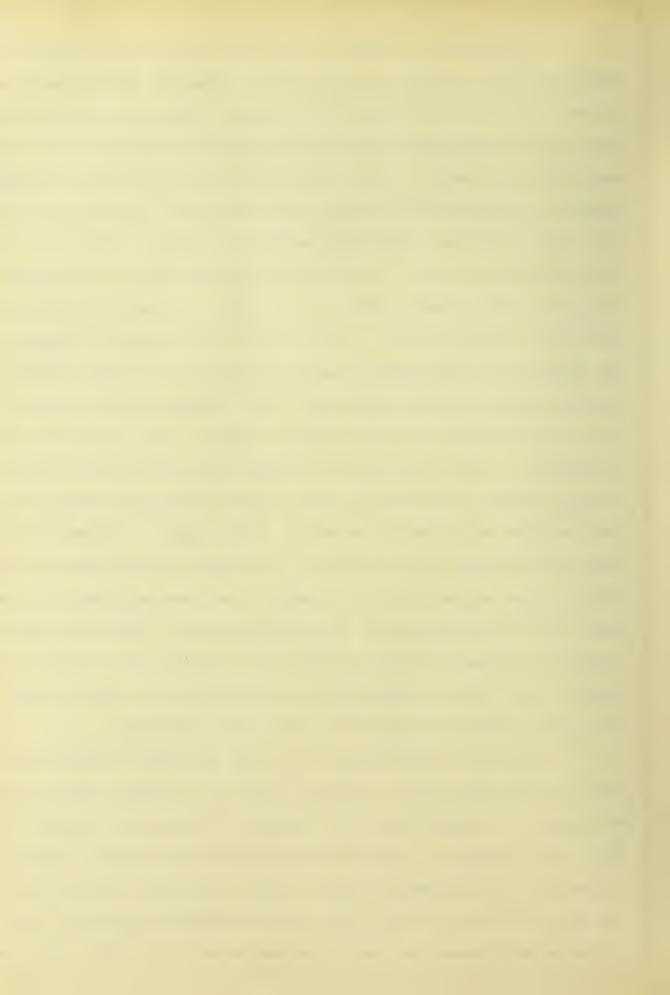
In "Die Wage" we have the idea that there is also no fear of judgement to the man who does good to his fellows. Were there no reward horeafter, his own present, peaceful conscience is reward enough. "Consequence is always coupled with the deed. Reward for the good, and punishment for the evil. In the human heart the judge, conscience, sits enthroned, and weighs and makes complaint, testifies and makes speaks with the open book before him. But in the heart of the pious good man there is rest. He knows not his deed, yet his inner worth surely rewards him with happy delight. Also in the coming of the Last Judgement the scales sound and gleam, 'What you did to the least of humanity you did to me, come and enjoy your reward.' "

In "Die Sieben Wunsche" we have Herder expressing the following beautiful wishes: "First, Love. Second, May the heart of my friend never be cold toward me, may love and life never be old. Third, To rejoice in the happiness of others and to be satisfied with my lot. Fourth, A merry, vigorous heart as long as it beats; a heart fresh in youthful force and beauty. Fifth, To scorn prejudices and mere gew-gaws, and to live for my fatherland, Humanity. Sixth, That sweet kind of fame which never dies away but echoes and re-echoes from the hearts of others. Seventh, A silent wish -- Immortality." The thought in the sixth wish is fully explained in the poem "Der Nachruhm" where Herder says, "That kind of fame which sounds from trumpets does not charm me, for it blusters like the storm-wind and is just as soon blustered out; but rather that silver tone which sounds unheard and sings to my Muse most beautiful reward, the thanks which comes from the heart, the tears which flow from the eye and greet me with brotherlove." The whole poem is so grand noble we should like to give it all but space will permit only this thought, "We swim in a sea of time, wave upon wave. The sea of all-forgetfulness is our last abode. Enough if wave gave impetus to wave, and the influence remained without name."



To continue the thought of love toward humanity and brotherhood of which Herder is so very full we will look at the poem, "Der Verschiedene Weise der Moral" and close this thought with it, although there are many other excellent poems such as, "Menschenbestimmung" and "Zufriedenheit" in which the ideal for man's life is set forth. "In the public market place with the tone of commander appeared the god Imperativus in lordly splendor and said, 'I am the Ich, son of real wisdom, a vocative of duty and a nominative of justice. Whoever strays from honor trembles at my throne. I am the fiscal Accusative of the smallest guilt, and behind me, there, stands a dark keystone of rewards and punishments, the god Infinitivus. Yet who are you?' 'I am the son of poor Humanity, an implorer, the shy Optativus, yet even my wishing and my striving become my reward. Here is my comrade, the helpful Dativus, a good man. 'Ah, a beggar-reward be to him, and then called out louder with kettle drums and trumpets, 'Man's honor is commanded, not prayed for.' The noise passed on; the gentle human love with its wishes and its hopes remained, and kindled the tender impulses of the heart saying, 'You men love each other and be kind to one another. Gladly pardon; we all must make mistakes. But constantly hope for the better. For hope strengthens souls. Expect little in order to give all the more richly. Do not count on Wertsein; for man's whole life is striving instead of having and possessing. Fled was the noise, its beating of drums was past. The gentle voice, tender and low, sounds in the hearts of all. With hopes man spends his life and every wish, however gently one has spoken it striving on passes to the most distant posterity."

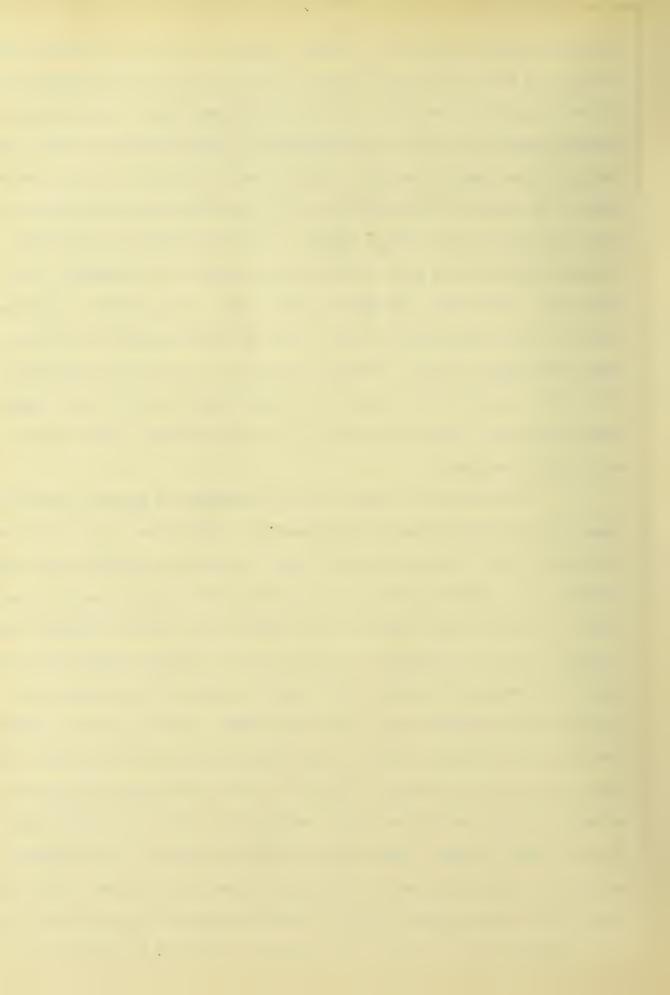
This last thought brings us to an idea which runs all thru Herder's poems and that is that just as in nature we have what scientists call conservation of energy, so in thought and feeling nothing is ever lost but is passed on to live forever in the All. The poems themselves will make it clearer. First, in "Die Nature" is the thought of nothing in nature being lost. "Have you not seen how every thing presses to life? What cannot become tree becomes leaf; what cannot become fruit becomes bud; what cannot become man becomes child. Have you



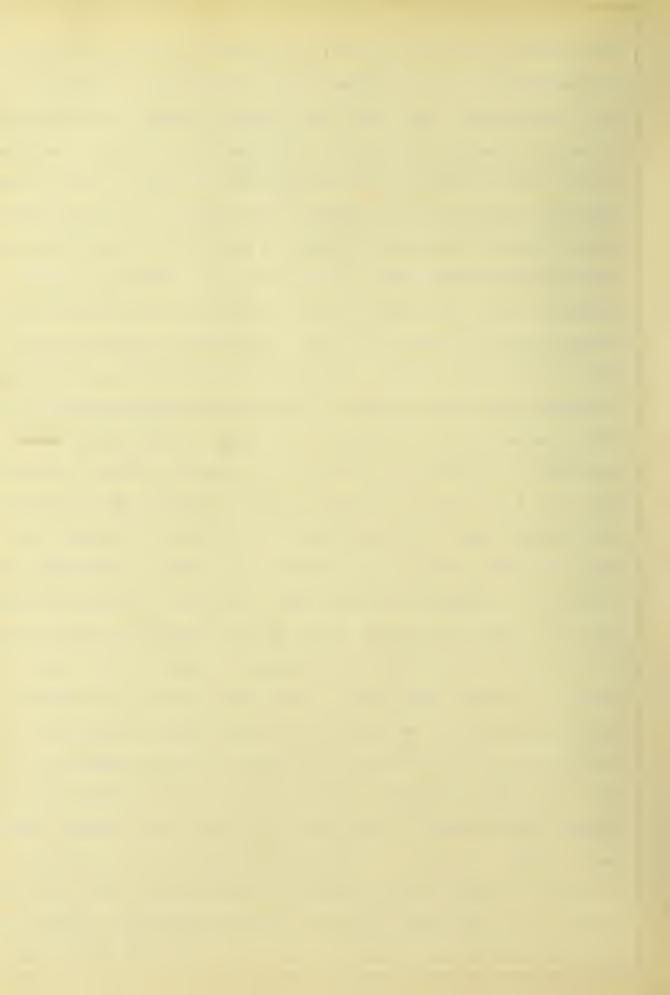
not seen how everything is full of life? Already in the leaf is the high form of the tree, in the bud the full strength of the fruit. See the rich fullness of nature, labyrinth for new life, shortening thousands of ways a thousand-fold, enlivening everywhere, she the all-enlivened one. Living weaving of nature, eternal spring of young buds, if they wither here in me do they die? Are they when vanished in me nowhere at all anymore? No, you bloom where you are, arrived by a short way, you the great mother's darling. The tenderest shoots wither first.

Blessed, forever blessed where you are in the paradise of the Eternal. Only blossoms here on life's tree, but there on life's tree, already fruits. Mausoleum of Nature! where death furthers to life. This bud became a plant when it died; that human plant became a genius. Blessed, blessed am I who am in the world full of life of God. My veins seethe with it; my sould drinks in God's light. Empire of nature where every thing becomes alive! Every force is God's flash of fire; every soul, God's life-light."

More clearly is brought out this conception as applied to thoughts and deeds in a poem called "Zweites Selbstgespräch." "There sleeps in me, in the womb of chaos, O what a world of thoughts.' Around one point, an endless field turns itself into the shadowy distance. Here around my brow sleep the ashes of the past and in it the germ of the future. So in death's urn the ashes of the Past become the germ or bud of all Futurity." But we find this idea most effectively worked out in "Der Genius der Zukunft". "From out the dark sea of past deeds there rises up in the soul a shadowy form. Who are you, demon? Dost thou come to guide my bark up into the heights, into the blue, misty future where sea and heaven interweave theri garment of delusion? How now? Or art thou a flame from the high mast my will-o-the-wisp and not one of the rescuing ones, the star-crowned youth? Flame up, thou light of times! Song, thou dost beam from the face of the Past and art my torch to guide my way onward to where the future grows grey and to where the edge of the cloud envelops its head; to where heaven and earth are woven together as if they were one. For what is this knowing of life and thou gift of the gods,

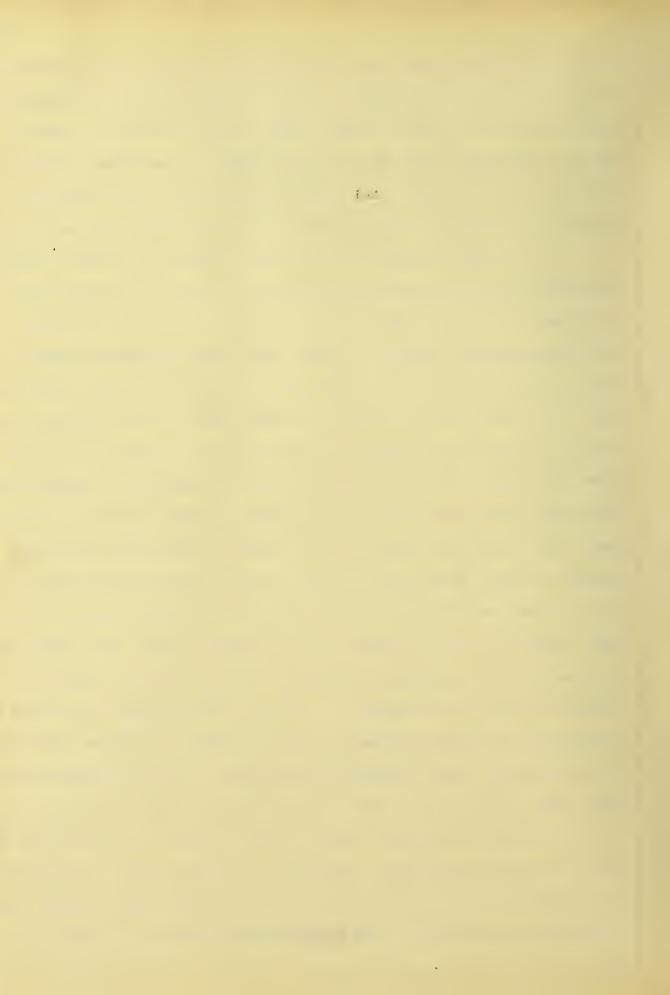


this prophetic face and this fortune-telling voice of divination? With features of flame the form of past ages glows in the abyss of the soul and shoots a strong shot into the future. See! There rise up forms of midnight as gods out of the graves and as seers out of the ashes. With flash of sword they tear the cloud to pieces. The spirit reads in its sea's magic mirror, Eternity. I pray to you, O soul with the image of divinity stamped on your features. In you the sustaining bands of the wide universe unite. Out of thy depths is woven world-structures; thou dost meditate and touchest even the border's end. Posterity in process of germination rests in the pregnant Chasm of the seething sea of thoughts, only it is deeply hidden and covered with clouds. Who found the sun-mirror with which to look into the hidden treasures of the dark sea? Who found the eye of this new creation and entered with triumph and took captive the deep-lying worlds, and came back and called himself the sovereign of the abyss? The spun yarn of all tangled and snarled and only the guide, Time, unravels fortunes inscrutable snarl. But I come now from the morning heights of reddening dawn and meditate about the other side, and fix my winged sight on the hope of the shore. See, there come already to me the high messengers of my transport. The topmost parts of the ship are garlanded with songs of joy. O ye gods, I see there the mountains are becoming green like triumphal pillars and they are blooming with the fragrance of the fields, and I am bathed in this fragrance. O land, O land, I have escaped the gulf of the black ferry, Death." Thus we find in this poem the highest conception of immortality. But Herder, like all human beings, seems to have had in earlier life and at different times questionings and doubts concerning this subject. For example, his musings in the poem written upon the death of Maria Kanter express, "The last one of my wishes flames up and then sinks down into nothingness. O Chasm -- I. Spirit, as God called forth spirits out of nothingness, so I call forth thoughts. He spoke bodies into existence; also I will, and there is action. And I though creator am yet some day to be nothingness? Thought, action, my Ich, no trace of them? I was not -- am -- am no more?" But Herder could not



have such questionings long for his great soul would soon cry out, "Yet midnight thought, be to me my morning star," and all thoughts of doubt in immortality would flee.when in "Das Grab" he says, "What, did you doubt me, you immortal one who here sympathized in the plan and work of nature; who meditated on what she had meditated on and unrefusingly and offered her your hand for her noblest, for her eternal work, namely the bringing about of order thru understanding and goodness."

In "Unsterblichkeit" we find that in thinking of a friend's death, Herder feels some questionings again but appeals to reason. "To think that a hand ful of dust is all that there is of man, would be to rave like a villian and to clank with everlasting chains. Ah Reason, what hellish frenzy could make me mistake you, and like the Furies scorn you and crown you with serpents instead of laurels. No! Rest O handful of dust for the ether spark which was allowed to sink into your breast only as a guest in this world, has now returned to the place where neither west wind or north wind can spoil it. And thou, O twig from out this earthly corpse art to become for my friend the bridal wreath of everlasting youth. No! Our spirit cannot sink into ashes even though earth does beckon to it. Therefore, friend, kneel here in the dust and pray freely to Him who cannot kill you." However, we are not to get the conception from Herder that man as divine is equal with God as absolute Divinity. Man is limited in that he was created and is both body and soul, thought and feeling; while God is infinite in that He is the Uncreated One and is pure Thought. In the poem "Die Vorsehung" we have this thot touched upon. "Why should distress and death terrify me? For always Providence covers me in God's hand whithersoever the way turns. Who was it who placed me in this world? -- A father -- A God. Eternal Thought. Father, God, Eternal Thought. It is thou who dost continually lead me. Thou art before me, hast numbered my steps and dost lead me to better worlds where the blossom ripens to the fruit; where I shall find what my heart seeks here but can never find. Thou dost receive the sprout and dost plant it again in the meadows of heaven, and whether it be a



wiolet in the valley or a cedar of God, we all bloom in the realm of God." Immortality as the goal for humanity reaches its fullest expression in "Selbstges-präch". "Yes I will live and not decay -- I will! What thou and God, thy divinity says, stands there. Dust I am for dust I wished be. Yet in me was born a spark which became a God, which glows in my every nerve. I feel it! And it looks toward the heights. And I! -- My every earthly part calls out with the sound, upward! A man! A God! Upward!"

One will see at a glance that it is difficult to make any sort of strict classification of Herder's poems on the basis of content. Herder was preeminently a poet of feeling, consequently we will find in his poems whether they be philosophical or otherwise, many and varied thoughts and feelings expressed in one and the same poem and each separate poem expresses an individual mood. What wonder then that his works appeal so strongly to humanity. For who of us, unless we have in this day of Ubercultur made machines of ourselves and are acting according to a fixed code instead of spontaneously and naturally as we should, is there who does not have days when all is hopeful and other days of questioning and doubt But the important thing for us to remember is, that thru all life's variableness which comes as a result of the material body which we have, we should never forget the Selbst but live in the highest sense with love toward humanity and with our soul's eye on the Eternal. We will close with this beautiful little poem "Der Gesang des Lebens" as a recipe for life. "As the days of men, so is the disposition of men. Zeuz covers them all with hangings good and bad. No, he covers nothing bad with hangings. Yet he caused the days to vary so that you in the midst of change may learn to be always the same. Thus the song of life rambles in high and low tones, but Kalliope gives us the sign that we should never lose the Tone."



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